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THE NARROW GATE

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"In His Steps," "His Brother's Keeper," "Born to Serve,"
"The Reformer," "His Mother's Prayers," Etc.

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PREFACE.

This story was written in the fall of 1902 and read to my Sunday evening congregation, one chapter at a time, at the Sunday evening service. It contains some incidents which were a part of the Prohibition movement in the State of Kansas, and none of the facts is exaggerated. The temperance picnic described in the story is a picture of one that really occurred during the campaign against the liquor interests.

It is my hope and prayer that the little story may prove to be some contribution to the temperance cause throughout this country, and in that hope the volume is sent out, with a prayer that it may be used by the Spirit of God to accomplish what the mere words of man can never bring to pass.

CHARLES M. SHELDON.

Central Church,
Topeka, Kansas, 1903.

THE NARROW GATE.

"For narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it."—Jesus Christ.

THE president of Lincoln College was closing his baccalaureate sermon, and had reached that part of it where he paused, and then said impressively: "Young ladies and gentlemen of the graduating class—"

The members of the class all arose but one, a young man sitting at the end of the pew. The president waited. The young man did not move, and the girl who had been sitting beside him glanced down at him, with a slight increase of color in her face and an amused look in her eyes. But he still sat there, to all appearance unmindful of the fact that the entire audience was directing its attention upon him, wondering at the delay. The president still waited. His usually stern face was relieved by a look of humor that showed its appreciation of the situation. "Young ladies and gentlemen of the graduating class," he repeated the words, and then waited again.

But the young man did not stir, and the girl who had been sitting by him reached out her hand, and touched him gently on the shoulder.

He gave a sudden start, his face glowed a fiery red as he stood up, while a titter went over the audience, and the president bit his lips before going on with his remarks to the class.

When the service was over the young man had not recovered from his confusion.

"You were in one of your brown studies, weren't you?" the girl spoke to him as they stood near the end of the pew, waiting for the crowd to go down the aisle.

"It was not only 'brown,' it was overdone," said another classmate, a young man standing next to the girl.

"No one would ever charge you with absent-mindedness," the girl remarked with a smile.

"No, I need all the mind I've got, on hand. I can't afford to let any of it be absent," the young man said, laughing. "But Douglas has plenty to spare."

"I was absent with all of mine this morning," said Douglas, blushing again. "If Miss Harris had not helped me out I might be sitting down yet."

"What were you thinking of?" asked the girl, with earnest curiosity.

"I was thinking," began the young man slowly, when he was interrupted by the president, who had just come down from the pulpit.

"Excuse me, Douglas, but can you call at the house some time this afternoon? I would like to have a little talk with you."

"Yes, sir, thank you," Douglas replied, and the president bowed in his courtly manner and passed down the aisle.

"Wonder what he wants," the young man said in a low tone.

"Probably wants to know what you were thinking about when you sat there," said the girl.

"I was simply wondering what I was going to do, now that I am a finished college product," said Douglas, with a slight smile, as he looked frankly at Miss Harris. "Don't you feel as if the world was a cold, cold place?"

"I don't feel that way," said the girl, with a bright smile; "haven't you heard of my good fortune? I have a school to teach."

"No, I haven't heard. Where?"

"Colby high school. I received notice of my appointment last night."

"Colby? Where's that?"

"Anderson county. It's a county high school. One of the best in standard. Congratulate me."

"Certainly. Wish I was as sure of something. I am ready to walk into any kind of an opening, as the blind horse said to the cellar. Do you know of any other openings in Colby?"

"No, I don't," said Miss Harris, looking half amused and half seriously at her classmate. "If I hear of anything——"

"If you do, write and let me know, won't you?" Douglas spoke with some hesitation and did not look at the girl. They were going out into the aisle, as the crowd had passed along.

"I don't expect to have much time to write letters. Schoolma'ams in high schools don't have much leisure," she said with a hesitation that was like his. He did not have opportunity to say any more, as some one came along and shook hands with Miss Harris, and he turned to greet some of his friends, who rallied him on the incident of his absent-mindedness.

In the afternoon he went over to the president's house, and was ushered into his study. President Gray greeted him kindly, and began by asking him a question.

"What do you expect to do, Douglas?"

"I don't know, sir. I wish some one would tell me."

"Was that what you were thinking about this morning?"

Douglas colored deeply.

"Yes, sir, your sermon set me to thinking, and I forgot where I was."

"Thank you. That is one of the best compliments my preaching ever received." The president spoke earnestly, and Douglas looked pleased.

"I don't know that I am quite ready to go through the narrow gate, sir, but I think I would like to do some kind of work that's worth doing. What you said about the entrance to real life made me want to amount to something."

The president was an unemotional man, but that did not mean an absence of feeling. He looked at the young man now with marks of deep interest, that grew as the talk went on.

"You have been here now seven years?"

"Yes, sir; I entered the academy in 1865."

"The last three years of your college course you have been editor-in-chief of the College Bulletin?"

"Yes, sir; and I have had a lot of experience on a small salary."

The president smiled slightly.

"I believe you have had some experience in the college printing department."

"A little."

"How much?"

"Well, sir, I can set type fairly well, make up the forms, run the press and holler for copy when I'm out of ideas."

"That is a good deal," the president laughed. "Have you ever thought of journalism for a life work?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

Douglas hesitated. "I have never thought I had any particular gift for it."

"Have you thought of going into any of the professions?"

"No, sir."

"Would you enter journalism if an opportunity occurred, especially if you had to enter the narrow gate to do the work?"

Douglas looked at the president in surprise. Then he said slowly:

"Yes, sir, I think so, if I thought I was fitted for it. But real

journalism isn't like the college kind. I don't have any foolish notions about that. But do you think I could——"

The president got up and walked across the room to the window that opened on the college campus and looked out. Then he came back and stood by the young man, laying a hand on his shoulder. Douglas could not remember ever having seen him do that to anyone before.

"How old are you, Douglas?"

"Twenty-five next September."

"I was twenty-seven when I graduated. You are young yet. You have a good constitution." He looked at the broad shoulders and the clear, resolute face, and after a moment's silence went back to his chair by the desk. His next question surprised the young man more than any other he had asked.

"Do you know where Colby is?"

"Colby?"

"Colby, Anderson county."

"No, sir, I don't know the place. I never heard of it until this morning."

"This morning? Did I mention it in my sermon?"

"No, sir." Douglas colored slightly. "Miss Harris is going there to teach in the high school. She told me so after the service."

"She is a fine girl. She will make a good teacher. Colby is fortunate. I am glad to hear of her appointment. Well, Colby is a town of about seventeen hundred people. It has fifteen churches, ten saloons, and a county paper. The paper is for sale. Now, Douglas, I am going to be frank with you. If you will go in there, and take the paper, I believe you could enter a career of great usefulness in that part of the state. If you do as I would like to see you do, you will have to go in through the narrow gate, but you will find life by doing it, and give life to others."

Douglas looked at the president in astonishment.

"I don't know enough."

"If you thought you did, you wouldn't."

Douglas hesitated, then the frank look on the president's face encouraged him.

"But I haven't the money to buy the paper."

"It's not a million dollar daily," the president said, with a smile. "I don't know exactly the terms on which the paper can be bought, but a business friend of mine in Colby wrote me he thought the paper could be purchased for fifteen hundred dollars."

"It might almost as well be a million dollars, sir, as far as I am concerned."

The president looked at him thoughtfully.

"You're not in debt?"

"No, sir. I have saved up a little."

"How much?"

"After I've sold out my share in the college book store, I'll have about five hundred dollars in cash."

"It pays to be a little absent-minded, young man," said the president, with a twinkle of the eye. "How did you manage so well? I was nearly that much in debt when I graduated."

"Well, sir, I began saving a little when I entered the academy. I never cared much for society or pie. Two years I boarded myself on one dollar a week, while I was clearing four and a half on night school. For the last three summers I've done canvassing during vacation and made a little over expenses. The book store business has been unusually good this last year."

"Five hundred dollars," the president mused. "Add another five hundred to it and that will make a thousand. You have a thousand dollars toward the paper already."

"A thousand dollars?"

"I don't very often anticipate the announcements of the board of trustees, but I will this time." The president spoke quietly, while

Douglas' face grew more earnest and his gray eyes glowed. "On commencement day the Carpenter bequest of five hundred dollars will be announced as going to Mr. Frank Douglas of the graduating class. This bequest is not conditioned as to its use, except that it shall be spent either in a year's study abroad or in some special reform work at home. The terms are in detail so defined that your use of the paper to further the work of reform in Colby will fully comply with the intention of the bequest. Indeed, I may add that another five hundred will in all probability be added to the amount by Mr. Carpenter, if he is fully satisfied that the paper will be used as it ought to be. If he does not see the way clear to help you to the amount, which may be regarded as a loan, I will see to it that the paper is purchased on good terms for you."

Douglas sat looking at the quiet figure of the president in some amazement. How was he to know that the stern-faced, apparently rather cold, unemotional man, who had been at the head of Lincoln College for twenty years, had in that period helped at least one student out of each graduating class into a special place of usefulness by just the same process of personal contact and brotherhood as Douglas was experiencing this Sunday afternoon? His whole impression of the president had to be made all over new. In half an hour he had been obliged to wipe out a seven years' portrait and paint in another.

"Do you think I can manage such a paper, sir?" He was grateful for the president's offer, and he glowed with some pride at the thought that the Carpenter bequest was his own, but his immediate feeling was one of question concerning the paper and its management.

"It is a county paper. It has been poorly managed for several years. The state campaign is on this fall, and the business men of the leading party are disgusted with the shiftless, colorless policy of the three or four men who have owned the paper. From my observation of your management of the College Bulletin I have faith in you, Douglas, to believe you can make a strong, positive, good-for-some-

thing paper out of the Colby Beacon. If I did not believe so I would not be having this talk with you."

"How large a circulation has the paper?"

"Only between six and seven hundred. It has fallen down to a ridiculous figure. You ought to bring it up to three or four thousand. Colby is a county seat. The farming districts are practically not reached, to say nothing of the town itself. These facts come to me from a business friend in Colby. His name is Edwards. Put it down for reference. He is one of the leading dry goods merchants in Colby, and one of God's noblemen. If you don't find anyone else there to stand by you, you can count on him."

"You are taking for granted that I am going, sir?"

"Yes; well, are you, that is, if the conditions as to the purchase of the paper can be met?"

Douglas sat a moment looking down. Then he lifted up his eyes to the president's face and said, quietly, "Yes, sir, I'll go, if I can meet the conditions."

It was only a sentence and it was spoken quietly; but it marked a very important part of the history of Frank Douglas, graduate of Lincoln College, in the year 1872.

After a moment of silence the president spoke, and Douglas was much moved to hear the voice tremble a little.

"This decision will mean a great deal to you, Douglas, and to the people of Colby, if you direct the paper as I believe you will. I don't want to outline your policy for you, and, indeed, no one can do that, but I am going to ask you one question. You will have to meet it at the start. The saloon in Colby. I take it for granted you will use your paper to remove that curse to the town and county?"

"You don't forget my father's history, sir?" Douglas replied, while the hot blood rose to his forehead.

"Pardon me, my boy, I need not have asked the question."

"Yes, sir, that's all right. You need have no fear in that direc-

tion. When my brother died, my father was just recovering from a drunken debauch. I was only ten years old at the time, but it burned into me forever. If fighting the saloon in Colby is going to wreck the paper, I'm ready to enter by that narrow gate."

"It won't wreck the paper. But you will have need of all your courage and wisdom."

"I expect to make a lot of mistakes, sir."

"Don't be worried about that. Learn all you can out of them and then forget them. That's all that mistakes are good for."

And then the president, again to the astonishment of Douglas, said very thoughtfully, "We ought to pray over this, Douglas. You are going into a work that will call for an unusual amount of wisdom and endurance and consecrated common sense. You will need all the help you can get from God."

Seated there in the study that June afternoon, President Gray offered a prayer that almost changed the habits of thought that had characterized Frank Douglas for the last two years of his college course. He had been a dreamer. Not an aimless or foolish dreamer, but his abstraction had not had any strong, definite purpose behind it. He was an average scholar and more than an average thinker. The president knew young men with a deep and wise knowledge. He had studied Douglas quietly but constantly. He was a rare nature that would crystallize certain unformed convictions under pressure, and apparently solidify a character with rapidity that previous habits had seemed to declare incapable of earnest, practical, living force.

So Frank Douglas, sitting there listening to that prayer from the president, whom he had deeply respected but had never until this moment known, felt a stirring of life forces in him rising surely to its vision of accomplishment in the world. He was a member of a church and had always called himself a Christian. His present experience was a larger opening of a larger life, and even as he listened, and the prayer helped him, he had some real fore-gleam of the fact

that the work he had chosen to enter would necessitate his entrance through a narrow gate. A large life afterward, but a narrow gate to go through before he realized it.

"God bless you, my brother," said the president, as Douglas thanked him. "You have a great opportunity. Let God make the most of it with you."

With that wish sounding in his heart he found himself, six weeks later, in Colby, in charge of the Colby Beacon, as proprietor and editor. The terms of purchase had been satisfactorily met, thanks to Mr. Carpenter, who had taken an unusual interest in the whole affair. Douglas knew the president was at the bottom of all that. After the details of the transfer were all agreed upon, he found himself in possession of a subscription list of six hundred and fifty-nine names, four hundred and eighty of which were paid-up, and the rest delinquent anywhere from one to ten years; a press that had required all his skill to clean and repair into any kind of working order, together with the type, furniture and miscellaneous belongings of the office from which the paper had been issued, in various degrees of shiftlessness, by its different proprietors.

It was the latter part of July, and the heat of midsummer was over the land; but he resolutely set to work to clean up the office, which, to all appearance, had never been troubled with broom or dust-cloth since it was first occupied.

He was down on his knees, after the dirt behind one end of the press, when he heard some one come into the office.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Douglas, but I was going by and thought I would just look in and introduce myself. I've just returned from New York. Heard from President Gray of your coming. Glad to see you."

It was a pleasant voice, and Douglas was helped by it as he got up on his feet and shook hands with the visitor.

"My name's Edwards. My store is in the block here. Success to

you. I see you're beginning all right. Going to give us a clean paper anyhow, eh? That's more than we've been getting the last few years."

"Yes, sir; I hope it will have that merit anyway," Douglas replied modestly. Edwards was a well dressed, alert-looking man of about fifty years of age. Douglas knew at once that Edwards would be his friend.

"When you get ready come around and let me fix up an attractive ad. for you. I'd like to consult you about it. Think we can get out something better than common."

"Thank you, Mr. Edwards. I appreciate that. If all the business men solicit ads. like that it will embarrass me."

"You won't be embarrassed very deeply," replied Edwards dryly. "But come when you are ready. Mrs. Edwards will be glad to have you call. Where are you stopping?"

"I'm boarding and rooming at Mrs. Wycoff's."

"Pretty good place?"

"I haven't been there very long. I only came a week ago."

"Well, we'll have you up to dinner soon. Don't get dyspepsia at the Wycoffs'."

"I'll try not to," Douglas laughed, as Edwards abruptly went out.

He cleaned up the office desk and then attacked the windows. After he had cleared away a pile of rubbish that had accumulated under the typeholders and the paper trimmer he came back to the desk, and sat down to make a general inventory of his possessions and a survey of the situation.

His entire office force consisted of two persons besides himself. There was a young man to set type and run the press who had been connected with the paper under its last management, and a boy to do general work, run errands, and get in the way when there was nothing else to do. These two members of the staff were out while Douglas was cleaning up, but he expected them in any moment with a piece

of casting which was needed for the trimmer, and for which they had gone to the railway station.

Sitting at the desk, the new editor and proprietor of the Colby Beacon drew a piece of paper towards him, and put down in visible form what he had been going over in his thought every day since that Sunday afternoon talk with the president:

THE POLICY OF THE COLBY BEACON.

1. I will try to get out a paper that will be of real value to all the people of the county.

2. I will advocate every good measure for the benefit of the town, and try to create a healthy pride in the physical welfare of the place.

3. I will offer the churches large space for announcements of their work, and emphasize the value of the religious life for the business interests of the town.

4. I will announce in my first issue that it is the fixed principle of the paper to fight the saloon out of existence as a thing of evil. The paper will not advocate any policy of dealing with the saloon except the policy of no saloon.

5. The paper will be independent in politics and will always be for the best man regardless of his particular party. It will advocate reciprocity in trade relations with other countries, the advisability of public ownership of public utilities, and the adoption of the single tax and the referendum, when these subjects are discussed. But it is probable that the paper will be far more occupied with the local needs of the county and town than with a discussion of these national issues.

6. The editor will welcome frank and good natured correspondence, and will always be willing to publish honest differences of opinion on topics of general value and interest. He does not expect to please everybody or have everybody agree with him. But he is honestly desirous of giving the people of Colby and the county a clean, courteous newspaper, that shall represent the best interests of the people.

7. Those who want this kind of a paper can get it for one dollar

a year, payable in advance. The editor is not a millionaire. He is in need of the money, and if those who are in arrears for the last ten years will pay up, he will not publish their names unless they request it as a special favor.

8. The editor asks for a fair hearing and can only promise to do his best. He will make mistakes, but will always be ready to acknowledge them. He naturally hopes that the business men will help support the paper with advertising, which will be made as attractive and readable as possible.

He had paused as if he had reached the end of his proposed statements when he heard voices and steps and looked up. Three men came in.

The man in advance of the others, an unusually large man, was perspiring very freely, and mopped his face as he took off his hat and looked at Douglas keenly.

"I'm Mayor Bartlett," he said, as Douglas stood at the desk. "These are friends of mine, citizens of Colby. Mr. Trask and Mr. Reed, Mr. Douglas. We were going by and thought we would step in and see the new editor. Just got back from the county convention. Didn't know Cleary was going to sell out the Beacon so soon. Hasn't been exactly a gold mine, I guess."

Mayor Bartlett looked keenly at Douglas all the time he was talking. When he was through, he put the cigar he had been holding between his fingers into his mouth and began smoking vigorously. His two friends followed his example.

"Won't you be seated, gentlemen?" Douglas said quietly. "I have just been cleaning house, and things are not all straightened out, but I hope to have them in order soon."

The visitors sat down, and the mayor fanned himself vigorously.

"It's a hot day."

"Yes, sir," said Douglas.

The mayor seemed to be sizing up the new editor, and was apparently not very well satisfied with his judgment of him.

"You've bought the paper outright, I understand, Mr. Douglas."

"Yes, sir."

"Might I ask, if it isn't too bold, what you had to give?"

Douglas told him.

"Too much," said the mayor.

"Altogether," asserted Mr. Trask.

"The concern isn't worth a thousand," added Mr. Reed.

Douglas did not say anything; but he looked surprised.

"You'll give us a good paper, Mr. Douglas?" asked the mayor.

"As good as I know how."

"How good is that?"

"You will have to judge of that after seeing it."

"I mean what's your policy? Your politics?" the mayor spoke bluntly; and, for the first time, Douglas could not help noticing the man's tone. It had an air of proprietorship about it that affected the young editor very disagreeably.

The sheets of paper containing his outline of proposed policy of the paper lay under his hand. He gathered them up, and suddenly leaning forward, handed them out to the mayor.

"I have just been outlining the policy of the Beacon. You are at liberty to read that, if you wish."

The mayor put his hat on the back of his head, shifted his cigar to the other corner of his mouth and took the sheets of paper that Douglas handed him.

He read in silence. But Douglas watched him and saw his face grow dark. When he finished, he looked up at Douglas and said with a sneer:

"A fine scheme, young man! Why, do you know you've tackled enough to bring in the millennium! You never can make that go here in Colby. Advertising! Who'll advertise in such a Sunday-school sheet?"

Douglas colored to his hair. The other two men were eyeing him between the clouds of tobacco smoke.

"Mr. Edwards will, for one."

"Edwards! Yes, and he'll be the one. Precious little advertising you'll get after the first issue. Why, young man, your politics ruin the paper to start with. He's going to be independent and run the saloon out, and lift up the standard generally," the mayor turned to his friends. "But it won't do, Mr. Douglas." The mayor assumed a conciliatory manner. Douglas quietly watched him. "You do not understand the local conditions. Why, you will simply commit suicide if you follow out the policy you have outlined there. You can't pay for the printer's ink in four weeks' time."

"I think I can," Douglas said mildly. The mayor did not understand him. He looked at the young man in silence for a moment.

"To tell the truth, Mr. Douglas, we came in here to make you a proposition to sell out. Fact is, I was on the point of making Cleary an offer, when these county conventions came on and I've not had time to see to it. Cleary got anxious and let the paper go. But you never can succeed with the paper. I'm giving you my honest opinion. Am I right?" he turned to the other men.

"Gospel truth," said Mr. Trask, spitting into the waste-paper basket.

"That's right," added Mr. Reed.

"Now we're ready to make a fair offer, Mr. Douglas. You've had the trouble of coming here and all that. We realize you've just got into possession and cleaned up and so on, but you've had no newspaper experience to speak of, and you are bound to fail on the ground you have mapped out. You don't know the political situation here, and we do. Frankly, we want the Beacon to help out the county this fall. I'll make no secret of that. And we stand ready to offer two thousand dollars for the entire plant as it stands. That gives you a clean five hundred dollars for your trouble and so forth. Of course, I realize

that the sum we offer is absurdly more than the paper is worth, but you understand we hope to increase the subscription list largely during the campaign."

Douglas had listened with his eyes on the sheet of paper which contained the outline of his proposed policy. When the mayor stopped, he lifted his eyes and looked squarely into his visitor's face.

"I don't care to sell," he said slowly.

"I know it's a trouble to get started and then leave."

"But I not only don't care to sell, Mr. Bartlett, I won't sell," said Douglas, slower than before.

The mayor stopped fanning himself, and the dark look on his face deepened, as he looked at the editor and proprietor of the Colby Beacon. It was not possible for him to know the fact but the way had become suddenly very straitened to the young editor, and he was about to enter the narrow gate of life. There was a prayer in his heart as he sat there that July afternoon, that he might not prove either a coward or a weakling as the gate swung inward to his soul.

CHAPTER II.

"DO YOU mean to say, Mr. Douglas, that you absolutely refuse our offer?"

The mayor had been very red in the face from the heat. There was an additional redness now, and an additional sharpness in his tone.

"I do. I have bought the paper with the purpose of conducting it along the line mapped out, and I don't care to sell."

"Then all I have to say is this: you're a fool!"

"Is that all you have to say? If so, I'll resume my work. Good day, gentlemen."

Douglas turned around to the desk and began to write. The mayor glared at the quiet figure by the desk, and for a moment seemed undecided. Then he uttered a short laugh and said: "Beg pardon, Mr. Douglas. I regret my words. I spoke in haste."

"I accept your apology, sir," replied Douglas, coolly. He turned from his desk and faced his visitors again. The mayor waited as if he had expected something more, but Douglas was silent.

"Fact is, I feel disappointed at your refusal. You see, Cleary almost the same as closed a deal with me before I went away. Naturally, I feel sore to find you in possession, and I am honestly giving you my opinion when I say that no such policy as you have mapped out can ever go here in this county. The people are for license here. The merchants, with the possible exception of Mr. Edwards, look on the saloon as a necessity to trade. It is a moral certainty that you

cannot get advertising if you come out against the saloon, as you propose to do. The other things you mention are not so important, although, to my mind, you will run up against all sorts of opposition with some of them."

The mayor paused, but Douglas did not say anything, and after an awkward moment the mayor went on. As he talked he narrowly eyed Douglas, as if uncertain to a large degree concerning his attitude. "If you won't sell, Mr. Douglas, how would you consider this proposition? It's no secret, of course, that we are committed to Grayson in this county for governor. But Anderson county is split on county officers, and, with the Beacon on an independent basis such as you propose, it is doubtful if we can elect Canning for county attorney." (The mayor was feeling his way cautiously, but he went on boldly, with the assumption that every other man in business had his price.) "If you would swing the influence of the Beacon for the election of Canning and let the saloon question rest until fall, the committee will see to it that the subscription list of the Beacon is doubled or trebled inside of a month. This will mean, putting the paper on a solid basis for you, and you need not fear concerning lack of advertising."

Douglas looked at the mayor.

"Is Mr. Canning a temperance man?"

"He's all right," spoke up Mr. Trask.

"Isn't it a fact that Mr. Canning has been on the side of the liquor men all he has dared, in cases which have come before him in his first term as county attorney? Isn't it a fact that the liquor men are giving him their hearty support in this campaign?"

"What do you know about it?" exclaimed the mayor with an oath.

"I am not quite as ignorant of the politics in Anderson county as you may think. At any rate, I know enough of the facts of Mr. Canning's record to say this: I not only will not swing the influence of the Beacon for the election of Canning, but I will use every influence I possess in the paper and out of it to defeat him."

The mayor got up on his feet and his passion found expression in his face and manner.

"You'll regret this! You've had a fair offer and it's the last one you'll get. Mark my words, sir"—the mayor started for the door, Mr. Trask and Mr. Reed preceding him, "mark my words, you're up against a hard proposition. Reform Colby! Reform Anderson county! Bah! After you have lived here as long as I have you'll find things can't be reformed quite so easy. Hang the reform business, anyway! You'll get your fill of it, young man, before you're through!"

The mayor stopped for a moment near the door, but Douglas did not offer to say anything, and the three men went out.

The editor of the Colby Beacon sat at his desk thoughtfully. He was not ignorant of the fact that he had thrown down the gage of war to the mayor of Colby and to that part of the party which he represented.

But he was making history fast, especially his own, and the rapidity of his development was only a mark of his personality. All through his college course, while living on one dollar a week and teaching night school, he had grimly held on, even though at one time it had seemed to him that he might have to drop out for fear of a physical breakdown. He lost twenty pounds and sewed the buttons on his overcoat about two inches farther away from the button holes; but he never said a word to anybody, and the discouragement of his struggle had never affected his steady cheerfulness.

He drew a piece of paper toward him and began to write. The hot sun poured through the window close by the desk and reminded him of the need of a curtain there sometime.

"It would have been cheaper if I had let the dirt stay on," he said to himself, as he got up and pinned a piece of wrapping paper over the lower sash. Then he resumed his writing, and when he had finished he read aloud, in a low voice, what he had written.

"CONCERNING THE COUNTY ATTORNEY."

"From reliable sources, the editor of the Beacon is informed that the nominee for re-election to the office of county attorney, Mr. R. J. Canning, is receiving the united support of the whiskey element of Colby and of Anderson county. The Beacon stands squarely on its anti-saloon policy as clearly declared in another column, and it will never support Mr. Canning or any other candidate for public office who is in favor of the liquor interest. If the friends of law and order in this county will get together on an independent basis for a temperance candidate for county attorney, the Beacon will give such a candidate its heartiest support."

"The mayor's visit gave me a subject for an editorial anyway," said Douglas, as he stuck the article on a hook. "'For this relief, much thanks,' as Mr. Shakespeare says."

Just then his assistant and the boy came in with the casting for the paper trimmer. He helped them put it in place, and by the time the work was done, it was time to close the office and go to supper. The assistant and the boy had gone out and Douglas had shut his desk and was turning to go, when Mr. Edwards stepped in.

"How are you getting on? Better come home to supper with me. You look as if the board at Mrs. Wycoff's was too rich for you."

"I don't know about that," Douglas replied with a laugh. "I'm not dressed to go into company," he hesitated.

"Oh, never mind that. Mrs. Edwards and I are plain people. You need a little change, and besides, I want to talk with you about the Beacon."

Douglas gratefully accepted the informal invitation, and when he found himself seated at the table in the Edwards house, with the kindly, motherly face of Mrs. Edwards beaming on him as if he were an old acquaintance, he felt very much at home, and allowed himself a moment of satisfaction at the thought of such friends, for the brief experience at the boarding house had been of the homesick kind and

would have been more so if the work of the office had not kept him so tired and so busy. Yet no one, himself least of all, could realize what plain, simple, hearty acquaintance with the Colby merchant was going to mean to the editor of the Beacon in the future.

"Let's see. When do you go to press? Take another biscuit. We've got a plenty of them, haven't we, Julia?"

"Yes, plenty. Take another, Mr. Douglas," Mrs. Edwards exclaimed heartily, while Edwards winked at Douglas and seemed to enjoy his confusion.

"Thank you. They taste very nice." Douglas blushed and took a biscuit. "My work has made me unusually hungry."

"May be that the fare at the Wycoff's is like number seven, that goes through here at midnight. It's limited. Or may be they put too much powdered lime or something in the biscuits. What do you use, Julia? When did you say that the Beacon went to press?"

"Friday."

"And it's Tuesday now. Of course, you run some advertising that's already on the list? Come into the store in the morning and I'll get out our attraction. What's your policy about ads.?"

"How do you mean?"

"Going to be frank with you. President Gray wrote me that was the proper way to deal with you. What I mean is this. Take another biscuit. They are awful small." Edwards took two at a time and made Douglas take another. "How about the ads. Cleary's been running for two years? Here's a sample. I'll read it if it won't spoil our appetite."

He reached out his hand towards the paper rack near the table and took out an old copy of the paper.

" 'Reinofel! The Greatest Discovery of the Age. Destroys the germs of disease. Absolute cure for dyspepsia, headache, rheumatism, gout, palpitation of the heart, eruptions of the skin, lassitude, dullness of sight, dizziness, numbness, and all disorders of the circu-

latory system. Ask your druggist for it, or send us one dollar for 12-oz. bottle; warranted to relieve; sent prepaid. Descriptive book free.'

"I'll warrant you it's warranted to relieve—relieve the sufferer of one dollar. Listen to this one.

" 'Great discovery for suffering humanity. Sanitariums a thing of the past. Consumption cured. Our new and startling discovery indorsed by the International Congress on Consumption, at Berlin, will absolutely cure coughs, colds, consumption, bronchitis, asthma, hay fever, and kindred throat and lung troubles. Every bottle guaranteed to satisfy, or money refunded. Sold by all druggists, at 50 cts. and $1. Trial bottle free.'

"Here's another. They're as thick in the Beacon as liars in a political campaign.

" 'Why suffer from rheumatism when Calderheim's Magic Balm will procure relief at once? Send us description of case and we mail, free of charge, sample box of Balm. Six boxes, $5. Endorsed by the leading physicians. Do not be fooled by rival concoctions. Ours is genuine. Samples will be given free as long as supplies hold out.'

"Supply of what? Fools?" Mr. Edwards blurted out, as he started to read another, but Mrs. Edwards said mildly, "Don't you think you have read enough, James?"

"Yes, more than enough. One is a dose. Do you know, Douglas, these patent medicine ads. have made me sick for years. After reading all these cures, sandwiched in between politics and local news, and religious items in our county paper, I have lost my faith in humanity, at least that part of it that advertises the stuff, and the other part that takes it at one dollar per bottle. Have you any settled policy about such ads.?"

"I haven't given it much thought." Douglas spoke with a good deal of hesitation. "But I see your point. The ads. are misleading. They promise too much. They—"

"In other words, they are the biggest kind of lies," said Edwards,

with cheerful emphasis. "But all the county papers are full of 'em, and I suppose they pay well."

"Cleary told me the paper couldn't be run without them."

"He did, eh?"

Mr. Edwards looked keenly at Douglas as if about to begin an argument, but only said:

"Have a biscuit. No? Well, what's left over will go into a bread pudding. You can come in and help us eat that. By the way, Mayor Bartlett dropped in to see me and warn me against the new editor of the Beacon this afternoon. He had been to call on you and try to buy you out, but I inferred he got sold himself." Edwards chuckled, and began helping Douglas bountifully to some fruit.

"I don't know about that," Douglas smiled. "But he did not buy me out."

"Tell us about it," Mrs. Edwards said, with interest.

Douglas gave a rather graphic account of his interview with the mayor. Edwards was intensely interested. He chuckled many times, and once during the narrative he was so much absorbed, that in mechanically helping himself to some berries, he dished a large spoonful of them into his tea. When Douglas had finished, he exclaimed:

"The mayor must have felt the need of all the patent medicines advertised in the Beacon! But do you realize what you have done?"

"I suppose I have made an enemy of the mayor."

"Not only that, you've got the machine down on you. You'll be the most hated man in Colby after Friday."

"Don't you think Mr. Douglas ought to have begun a little more cautiously, James?" Mrs. Edwards asked. She had already begun to feel a very warm interest in the young man and his plans.

"I doubt if the mayor would appreciate caution. He's one of these men who don't feel anything very much unless it knocks him down. But I think, myself, that the Beacon will be a stunner when it comes out this week. That one editorial alone will make the old

line politicians tell the editor of the Beacon to stop their paper. Your Monday morning mail will be interesting reading, Douglas. It will be fun to go through it."

"Do you think so?" Douglas asked, a little nervously.

"I know it. Why, if you carry out your policy, it will stir up Colby deeper than a dog show. There has never been anything like it here before. You have offended the mayor. You have got the machine lined up against you. You are going to fight the saloon. You are going to tell the truth. What more could you do as a starter to create a healthy sized crowd of people in Anderson county who will be coming into the office of the Beacon next week to lick the editor? If I were you, I would engage the services of a husky young foreman to sit at the desk nearest the door and tell visitors that unexpected repairs on the press have called the editor away suddenly to Clinton. Or you might pacify the callers by giving each one of 'em a box of Calderheim's Magic Balm as a premium for renewal of subscription. The balm will disable them at less expense to you than the salary of the foreman."

"Don't you mind Mr. Edwards' talk." Mrs. Edwards smiled at Douglas. "There are some good people in Colby who will stand by you. Mr. Edwards is one of them. He's really delighted to have you here and to know that you are going to get out a clean, wholesome paper; aren't you, James?"

Mr. Edwards brought his fist down with an emphasis that made all the dishes rattle and his wife and Douglas start.

"Delighted! I'm with you, Douglas, heart and soul. I have been so disgusted with the miserable, mean, contemptible paper we have had here for years, that it will seem as if the millennium had dawned for Colby when the new Beacon comes out Friday. And there's no use going slow or avoiding issues in order to win favor. I say, begin right. Tell the public in the first number just where you stand. Let the peanut politicians like Bartlett know without apologies just what

to expect. And, as for the saloon, show it no more mercy than you would show a rattlesnake that was coiling up to strike its fangs into your baby. I'm not the only person in Colby to say this either. We're in a minority, it's true. But we're right. I don't say you'll have an easy time in getting out the paper. Like as not, you'll fail. The saloons have never been attacked before. Colby's always been for license. Only two ministers in this town ever came out flat-footed against the saloon, and they didn't stay very long. The pressure was too heavy from the business church members. That's where you'll have the hardest pull. Right where you have a right to expect the heartiest support, you'll get the least."

"Don't be too hard on the churches, James."

"I'm not too hard on them. They're hard on themselves. We've got fourteen churches here, and it's seven too many, and only two of them ever went on record against the saloon in public. There's Vernon, now, at the First Methodist. He's a new man. Preaches his first sermon next Sunday. They say he's all right. Fought the saloon to a finish in Leander last year. But may be the pressure here will be too strong for him. There are a dozen men in this church who will want him to keep still on account of it's being election year. If he comes out against the whiskey fellows, it will make things lively here this fall. I had thought of going away on a little vacation this summer. But since Douglas and Vernon have come, I think there will probably be a lot of fun here, that is, if Vernon is the man they say he is."

Douglas spent the evening in talking about the paper and asking questions concerning local conditions. Mrs. Edwards interfered occasionally by asking Douglas about his college life. He was looking over an album of photographs as he talked, and as he turned the pages he saw a familiar face.

"Why, that's Miss Harris!"

"Yes, do you know her?" Mrs. Edwards asked.

"Of course. We were classmates together for seven years."

"O, I forgot. I remember now. Esther's mother and I are very dear friends. I suppose you know Esther has a high school position here."

"She told me so."

"Fine girl. Don't you think? Going to room and board with us. When is she coming, Julia?" Mr. Edwards spoke up.

"I expect her the first week in September. The term opens the fourteenth. You see, Mr. Douglas, since our own children have grown up and married and moved away, we have been lonesome, and it will be a great pleasure to have Esther with us. You'll enjoy meeting her, won't you?"

"Yes, ma'am," Douglas answered. He turned over the pages of the album and the talk went on about something else, but when Mrs. Edwards was called into the other room for something the girl wanted and Mr. Edwards got up to open a window on account of the heat, Douglas turned back to the picture of his classmate and looked at it earnestly.

"Of course," Mr. Edwards said when he came back from the window, "you have made up your mind to be disappointed in a great many things. We can't always get everything we want."

"No, sir," replied Douglas, still looking at the photograph.

"But never mind. Don't get discouraged. You haven't any rivals. The field is clear for you. That's something."

Douglas blushed and started. "You mean, the Beacon?"

"Why, yes. What did you think I meant?"

"O, nothing, nothing. I—of course it is worth a good deal to have the field clear, but don't you think the mayor and his friends may start up something?"

"It isn't at all likely. The time's too short between now and election. Don't worry over that. Make the paper interesting. Flat-

ter the indifferent public a little. It likes flattery. Don't surrender a single principle, and roast the machine and the saloon to a finish, but let the public know you are in love with Colby and surroundings. Do the way you would do if you were courting some nice girl who was a little superior to you in intelligence and a good deal superior in good looks. See me? My wife is a seraph by the side of me, and I was as homely as the rough side of a match-box when I was a young man. But I won her by simply a combination of true flattery which took her attention off of my looks and directed it to her own and an independent attitude of standing up for unpopular causes that I knew were right. Any girl of spirit likes that sort of independence. You treat the public like that, and first thing it knows it will be attracted to the paper in spite of itself. Just as my wife was attracted——"

"How is that, James?" his wife said, as she came back into the room and caught the last words.

"I was just telling Douglas," said Edwards, winking at the young editor, "that you were attracted to me before we were married on account of my good looks. I've lost most of them since, but you haven't, Julia. You grow handsomer every day."

"That's a sample of his way, Mr. Douglas," said Mrs. Edwards, laughing. "It was his flattery that won me more than his looks. But neither flattery nor looks are worth anything by the side of downright plain goodness. That's the real reason I was attracted to my husband."

"Talk of flattery, man!" Edwards exclaimed, but the look he exchanged with his wife revealed a genuine courtship between the two that had continued through twenty-five years of happy married life.

Douglas noted it swiftly and looked at the picture of Miss Harris again before he turned over the pages. The remainder of the evening was spent in general conversation and it was after ten o'clock when he went away.

"Let's go hear Vernon next Sunday," Edwards said, as Douglas was going out. "Our church is closed for repairs while the minister is away." The Edwardses belonged to the Presbyterian denomination.

"All right, I'll be glad to go," replied Douglas. He said good night and went back to his dingy little room in the boarding house, carrying with him a pleasant picture of Edwards and his wife standing in the doorway of their home heartily inviting him to call often. When that picture dissolved there came on the screen a photograph that, in spite of his attempt to remove it, stayed there to trouble him with a pleasant pain of indecision.

"My work's cut out for me with the paper. I've no time for anything but hard work. There's no room for romance even if—" he let the thought stop there, and next day resolutely went down to the little office and began to get out the paper.

The work was so absorbing that it soon compelled every faculty of his mind and every ounce of his physical strength. He was planning to get another helper as soon as possible, but had not been able to do it yet. He worked with tremendous energy. Took little time for meals or sleep. When the papers were all mailed out of the office Friday night he experienced a reaction. That night he slept late, and when he went down to the street about ten o'clock he was hardly prepared for the effect his first appearance as an editor was making on the people of Colby.

Late Friday evening he had hired some boys to take extra copies of the paper over town and distribute them at the stores and residences of non-subscribers. When he went down the street that Saturday morning he could not be ignorant of the fact that in a real sense the paper was creating a real sensation.

"I told you so," said Edwards, coming to the front of his store as Douglas looked in as he was going by. "There hasn't been so much excitement in Colby since the last dog show. The paper's all right. When those medicine ads.' time expires—well—I believe you'll be led to do the right thing. But the whole town's reading the Beacon this morning. You've stirred up the animals in great shape."

"I hope the paper will accomplish something," Douglas said modestly.

"Accomplish something! Why it's done that already. You'll hear from it by Monday. Shouldn't wonder if the post office should have to hire some extra clerks. Don't forget about church to-morrow. Come around to the house and we'll all go together."

Douglas promised, and went along down to his office. As he walked past the little hotel in the next block he was conscious that a group of men sitting out on the veranda, that was built close to the sidewalk, were discussing something quite vigorously, and as he went by one of them spoke his name to the rest, and the entire group gazed at him with staring interest. He held his head up and tried to appear indifferent but only partly succeeded. As he was turning into the office one of the saloon men, whose saloon was across the street from the Beacon, pointed him out to a customer who had stopped for a morning drink. Douglas could not hear what was said, but as he opened the door and went in he heard the two men laugh, and the sound affected him disagreeably, though he was soon busily engaged in the office and paid no attention to the feeling. The laugh, however, conveyed to him a hint of the way in which the saloon men were taking his declaration of war.

In the afternoon he closed up the office at three o'clock and went out for a walk. He wanted to think a little outdoors. There was a stream near the town with a fringe of woods on the banks. He walked down to a spot where a small ravine entered this fringe of trees, and sat down at the foot of an old elm.

As he sat there he realized that his dreaming days were over and that his active life work had begun. The president's prayer recurred to him. There had been one or two phrases in the prayer that stuck in his mind. "Make us brave to begin and patient to keep on." "Grant this son of thine a vision of real value so that he may not be afraid to lose those things that are not worth keeping at the expense of the

things that are of eternal worth." "If the time comes when he is tempted to throw away his ideal, remind him, Lord, of that One who chose a cross instead of a crown."

He got up from the foot of the elm and slowly walked down the ravine until he reached the stream. He followed that for a mile or more, quietly reviewing his experience and measuring his opportunities. He was not conscious of any remarkable feeling, or of any unusual revelation of spiritual help, but when quite late in the afternoon he found himself back in his little room, he was calmly confident of his course, and in a certain defined way that was more satisfactory to him than a more positive exaltation, he felt assured of continuance and stability in the policy he had deliberately outlined. He read his daily Bible passage, and offered his evening prayer with a cheerful faith in the power of right, that was, in one true sense, the nearest approach he had ever known to a personal communion with God.

The next morning, according to his promise, he went with Mr. and Mrs. Edwards to the First Methodist Church to hear Mr. Vernon.

When the preacher began his service, Douglas felt disappointed. His disappointment was evidently shared by the unusually large congregation. The church was filled, and the people were even standing in the back part of the house. But as the service went on, Douglas began to experience a change of feeling. The preacher was a very plain, unattractive man, about forty years old, with a voice which was not very well trained, and a manner which at times was so awkward as to be painful. When he reached the place of the sermon in the service, he stepped out from behind the pulpit and said abruptly:

"My text this morning is the whole Bible."

"His text is bigger than his sermon," muttered Mr. Edwards to Douglas. But it was at this point that Douglas and every one else began to get interested, and lose the first feeling of disappointment.

"Brothers and sisters, to tell the whole truth, I didn't want to come here," the preacher began, after his announcement of his text.

"I have just been having a five years' fight with the devil over the saloon in Leander, and we had licked him out of that town, and I wanted to rest a little while. But I got my appointment to come here, where the same old devil is at the same old stand, and it almost discouraged me at first when I heard of my appointment, for I felt as if I had earned a rest after those five years; but the Lord and the bishop thought otherwise, and here I am; and now that I am here, I am going to love all of you people, and do my best to have you love me. I won't ask you to love me for my good looks, for that would be asking too much; but if you can overlook any failings in that direction, I will try to do the same in your case. If I were a member of this church, I would want to have my minister be very frank and honest at the very start; not keep anything back, nor try to please everybody, and I am going to outline in brief what I believe we all ought to practice. That is the reason I chose the Bible for my text. It contains the whole duty of man. And if what I say this morning offends anyone, I hope you will remember the Bible has said it all these years; and if you are offended, you are not being offended at my words, but at the Word of God. It is His truth that I am going to give you."

He then went on rapidly to choose a number of verses from the Bible which, he said, were fundamental, and represented his thought of the preaching that the times demanded. Douglas was interested in it all, and especially in one part, when he mentioned the saloon again. The congregation had all lost the indifferent and disappointed air that had marked it, and was now thoroughly interested and aroused.

"Among other things that I am going to do while pastor of this church, by the grace of God, is to preach and pray and work for the removal of the saloon and the gambling-house in this town. I see no more reason for licensing the saloon than for licensing a place where men are allowed to burn so many houses every year for so much a year, or steal so many pairs of shoes at so much a year, or assault so many people at so much a year. The saloon has no more right to be licensed

than a counterfeiter's den. It is evil, and only evil, and as such I believe the church ought to fight it. That is what I intend to do, and that is what I want every member of this church to do. Let me read you a letter."

He took a paper out of his pocket and began to read. The stillness all over the house was painful as the reading went on.

"I received this in my mail last night. I venture to say it is only the first out of a large number that will reach me before I have been here six months.

" 'Mr. Vernon:

" 'Dear Sir: I write you concerning my boy, who has just left the farm to go to Colby. I've heard of your fight against the saloon in Leander, and how you succeeded in driving it out, and I read in the paper that you are going to Colby, and I don't know anybody in Colby, so these are the reasons I am writing this letter to you. My boy is seventeen years old; he got tired of the farm life and begged to go into town. A neighbor's boy, who is a clerk there, got him a place in a hardware store in Colby, and I fixed up the boy's trunk, and he left us two weeks ago. He's written me twice since, but I learned from my neighbors only yesterday, that their boy and mine had been going into the saloons in Colby. O, sir, if you can know what that means to me, you would not wonder that I am writing this letter. The boy is not bad. But he is weak and easily led. I have no friend or acquaintance in Colby, or I would write them, instead of troubling you, a stranger. But will you not do something for me for my boy? God knows his father fought drink for twenty years, and finally gave up, and died in a drunken spree. Then I sold what few things we had, and with the help of my brother secured the little farm on which I am now living, and moved out here with my children. I had a terror of the city or the town where the saloon was licensed, and I wanted my children to grow up where the temptation would not reach them. When Frank, that's my boy, began to get restless, and I saw he was unhappy on the farm,

I knew it would do no good to try to force him to stay here, and I prayed with every stitch I took on his clothes, and, as I packed his trunk, my supplication was, 'O, my Father, if you are good, and, if you hear prayer, keep my boy safe.' We are very poor, and I have been more or less of an invalid all my life. I am writing this as I sit up in my bed. I have two beautiful children—a girl nineteen years old, who does the work in the house, and a noble son, twenty-two years old, who manages the little farm. Frank is my baby. My brother, if you or your church people can reach my boy and get him under Christian influences, won't you do it? For the sake of Christ, won't you do something? It's asking a good deal and putting a heavy burden on one, who, I have no doubt, is already carrying a great load, but I do not know where else to turn for help. As you love God and believe in Christ, help save my boy, and a mother's blessing will be yours as long as you live.' "

Mr. Vernon looked up from the reading of this letter, and for a moment the stillness was unbroken, while every eye was fixed on the plain, but honest face of the preacher. Then he said in a low voice, while the people in the rear of the church leaned forward intently to listen:

"Do you wonder that there are some people in this country who are called fanatics and cranks by the politicians and the respectable drinkers, and the indifferent church members who never bear any one's burdens? Do you wonder that some of us have no other remedy for an institution like the saloon except its extermination? Is there any other business known to the human race that deliberately, for the sake of money, in cold blood, makes its living out of the broken hearts of mothers, and the ruined souls of boys like these? Is it any wonder that some of us are ready to pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor in a war against this tyranny, which is greater and more insolent and unbearable than the tyranny of any king or monarch known to history? And will this church answer this letter, or will

you tell me how to answer it? Shall I write this woman, politely telling her we cannot do anything, and that the saloon is a legally licensed institution, and is here to stay, and we are sorry, but the boy must learn to resist temptation, and so grow strong? We will invite him to church and Sunday-school, and welcome him into our league, but as for removing the saloon, that is beyond our power. What do you advise? It's only a boy from the country. It's true, his mother's heart out on that lonesome farm is agonizing over him, but what will Colby do for money to pay for its school-teachers, and the improvements of the new park? For all these things are paid out of the saloon license. But I don't ask this church to answer this letter for me. I have no doubt as to the answer, and I say right here, as we meet for the first time in the relation of pastor and people, that when I answer this letter to-morrow, I shall tell that woman that the church in Colby will do its utmost to save her boy, and I shall add, that as for myself, I shall never cease, during my stay here in this town, to fight this institution with all the strength God has given me until, by his grace and the efforts of all those who believe as I do, the saloon is exterminated from Colby forever!"

Over the church there swept a rustle of applause. It was started by some of the women, until it arose into a vigorous handclapping, the first time in the history of that church that such a demonstration had ever been known.

Edwards looked at Douglas and his look conveyed the same idea that Douglas had already swiftly entertained. A crisis in the political, business, and church life of Colby was at hand, and the next few weeks were going to witness some of the most interesting and intensely important events in the lives of many in that congregation.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the service was over the congregation went out very slowly. A number stayed to speak to the minister.

"Let's go up, and tell him we're with him," said Edwards, and Douglas quickly assented, for another reason as well. There was a line of people shaking hands with the minister, and Edwards and Douglas waited until nearly the last. When they were in front of him, Edwards introduced himself and then Douglas.

"O, you're the new editor of the Beacon. I haven't had time to come around to see you. Mrs. Vernon has been ill too, and I have not had a moment's time to call. But I saw enough of the paper to thank God. Why, look here, young man, you're a young fellow. How old are you?"

"Twenty-five. I hope I'm young enough to learn something."

"Learn something! You're teaching the rest of us. I glanced at your outline of policy for the paper and it gave me inspiration. I said to myself, 'I am not going to be as lonesome in Colby as I feared.' The Lord be with you, Brother Douglas."

"And with you, sir."

"I say Amen to both of you," exclaimed Edwards, who was in a fine state of excitement. "I didn't really expect to hear what I've heard this morning, Mr. Vernon. I thought at any rate you would probably wait a few weeks and feel your way."

"Why should a man wait to feel his way with a congregation when the issue is as plain as sin? There is too much feeling the way with

the pulpit in America. But it does my heart good to meet you two. I've heard of you, Brother Edwards. There are some who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

"Yes, the applause showed that. Very unusual. Never heard the like in a Colby church before," said Edwards.

"It was the letter," said Douglas, "I saw several women crying. I want that letter, Mr. Vernon, to print in the Beacon."

"I'll give you a copy of it when I call to see you in the office tomorrow. I want to talk over matters generally. Pray for me, both of you."

Edwards insisted on taking Douglas home with him to dinner, and during the meal they discussed the situation.

"Things are going to get stirred up in Colby, I guess. That sermon of Vernon's was a stem-winder. It went to the bottom. It'll make him enemies as well as friends. Did you see Judge Butler's face?"

"I don't believe there will be as much opposition to Mr. Vernon as you think, James," Mrs. Edwards ventured to say. Mrs. Edwards always took a hopeful, charitable view of people and events.

"I hope not, Julia. But sometimes the devil is the liveliest in the church. I've seen more rows started between church members than any other one class of people."

"And yet," said Douglas thoughtfully, "it is through just such men as Mr. Vernon in the church that all the social questions are being bravely and intelligently brought to the public notice. The unchristian men and women of society are never active in any reform."

"That's right. O, well, we have at least more than a fighting chance. We know where Vernon stands, and we know where the Beacon stands, and we know that we're in for an interesting time. Mark my prediction though. There's going to be trouble at the First Methodist. Judge Butler's one of the trustees. There are others who feel as he does."

Douglas began his work Monday morning with a lively consciousness of impending events. Mr. Vernon brought in the copy of the letter, and Douglas turned it over to his helper to set up at once.

"I wish the Beacon had a circulation of a million copies, and that this letter could be read by five million people in the United States," said Douglas with emphasis.

"I wish the entire population could read it," Vernon replied. "Do you know what staggers me every day of my life as I think of the saloon business, is the apathy of the people. The most heart-breaking facts in lives of mothers and little children don't seem to move the public very much. I once showed a church full of people a list of horrors all due to drink, that I had clipped from the daily papers in one week, tragedies that put on the stage would make everyone shed emotional tears, and then, as usual, go home and do nothing, and that church full of people received the narrative of that list of horrors with the same indifference apparently that they would have shown to the reading of so many advertisements."

"The people yesterday were not indifferent," Douglas ventured to say.

"No, there's hope in that. I don't mean to be pessimistic. I'm not either. Only it makes your heart ache sometimes to face the nominal Christianity which professes so much and does so little."

Douglas was on the point of asking him whether he expected opposition from some of his church people, but on second thought he kept silent, not wishing to suggest something which Mr. Vernon had not as yet mentioned. The minister went out after a hearty word of encouragement on the policy of the Beacon and a prophecy concerning its influence.

All through that day and the next Douglas worked energetically, feeling the pressure of the movement he had himself begun. He wrote up the service at the Methodist church, and gave a graphic picture of the scene when the applause began. In two brief but strong editorials,

calling attention to Mr. Vernon's brave beginning, he commended his action in every way.

"The Beacon believes in that sort of preaching," one of the editorials concluded. "And we believe the Christian people of Colby will endorse Mr. Vernon in his outspoken declaration of war against the saloon and all it represents. Certainly all the mothers in Colby who heard that letter from the mother on that farm must feel responsibility for the safety of their own boys. The saloon is evil and only evil. It has not one redeeming quality. It is not a social necessity. It does not exist to supply such a purpose, and never had any other than to sell liquor to any one who had the price to pay for it. Its history proves it to be absolutely heartless and conscienceless. Every minister, every church, every business and professional man, every father and mother, ought to unite to destroy a common enemy of civilization, an enemy more dangerous than fire, or flood, or pestilence, or war, or all these things combined."

Mr. Edwards' prediction about the flood of mail Douglas would probably get on Monday was only partly true. The editor did receive a large number of letters, and by Wednesday night the number had increased to a very respectable mail for a country town editor. But while some of the letters were abusive and some ordered their papers stopped, nearly if not quite half of the letters were commendatory and encouraging.

On the whole, the letters proved very interesting reading. Thursday morning brought a fresh lot from the county precincts. Douglas was at his desk cutting open the envelopes, and noting with some satisfaction that a good many of them contained money-orders for subscriptions, when his attention was suddenly directed to the young man who had been his helper at the presswork of the paper.

His name was Coleman, and Douglas did not know him very well. He had worked as pressman on the paper before Douglas bought it and had been recommended to him by Cleary, the former owner.

He came up to the desk where Douglas was sitting, and without any preface or explanation, he said abruptly:

"I'll have to leave you to-day, Mr. Douglas."

Douglas looked up in astonishment.

"Leave me to-day!"

"That's what I said."

"But the forms are not made up, and we go to press to-morrow!"

"Can't help that; I've got another job, and I've got to leave."

Douglas looked at him in growing astonishment and anger.

Then, for the first time since assuming charge of the paper, he lost his temper, and spoke sharply.

"You have no right to leave me this way without giving me notice!"

"It's a free country," Coleman answered coolly. "There's no rule about giving notice."

"Only the rule of common every day courtesy, which evidently you don't possess," replied Douglas, sitting up in his chair very rigid, and looking at the tall pressman savagely.

"I hain't goin' to quarrel," Coleman answered slowly; "but I'm goin' to quit. You can get some one else in my place, I s'pose. I'm done with the Beacon."

He turned around, and started to walk over towards the corner, where he was in the habit of hanging up his hat and coat when he came into the office. Douglas swiftly recovered himself. He had not the remotest idea of the reason for the pressman's sudden action, and it had taken him completely by surprise. He got up and walked over towards the man. Coleman took down his hat and coat, and turned about to find Douglas near him.

"You haven't given me any reason for leaving."

"You haven't asked me for any."

"Then I will now. What are you leaving for?"

"For good."

Douglas took a step towards the man and came as near striking him in the face as he ever had been tempted to hit anyone.

"Is it on account of the policy of the paper?"

"Don't care to say."

Douglas felt at sea. After a moment's thought, he said,

"Is it a question of wages?"

"Possibly."

"You've never said anything to me about it. You seemed satisfied with our arrangement. What reason have you to suppose I would not increase your pay if you had asked for it?"

The man hesitated a little. He put on his coat, and stood changing his hat from one hand to the other.

"I don't feel under any obligations to give reasons, Mr. Douglas. I've no quarrel with you, and wish you well. But I have had a better offer elsewhere, and I've promised to take it."

"But do you think it's the square thing to leave me in the hole this way? I can't get out the paper without help. Can't you stay with me until the presswork is off, and give me time to look for another man?"

The pressman shuffled his feet uneasily. He did not meet Douglas' look and as Douglas faced him, for the first time the editor of the Beacon noticed the shifty, cunning eyes that avoided his own.

"I've promised to go on my new job to-day. Sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Douglas, but I can't stay with you."

"You ought to have given me due notice," exclaimed Douglas, with another burst of anger.

The man made no reply, and started towards the door. Douglas glared around the office at the uncompleted work, and hurriedly tried to make an estimate of the amount of time it would take one man to get the forms ready. He choked down a sudden desire to give the

pressman a vigorous statement of what he thought of him, and said good-naturedly:

"Look here, Coleman, you know as well as I do that no living man can get out the paper between now and Friday night without help. If the papers don't get to the office by that time, they will miss the mail route Saturday morning. The people in the country want the paper Saturday. If they have to wait till Monday, it will make them mad, and give the paper a black eye just as I'm starting in. Everything counts just now one way or the other. If you'll stay with me till Friday night, I'll give you ten dollars for the two days. Isn't that fair? I've paid you up to tonight, but I'm willing to make this extra, on account of all that's depending on the Beacon just now."

Coleman looked undecided for a moment. Then he turned and walked slowly out of the office, saying as he went out, "I'm sorry, Mr. Douglas, but I've promised to begin on my job to-day."

"Where are you going? What job is it?" Douglas called out after him, anger rising again at the sight of the man's cool, deliberate indifference to all thought of justice or fairness.

"You'll know in time, if you don't know now," Coleman turned about for a second and spoke with an exasperating grin on his sallow face.

Douglas walked over to his desk and sat down there, resting his elbows on it and going over the situation. This was something he had not counted on. It was a complete surprise, and it found him unprepared.

He was casting about in his mind for relief, wondering if another pressman could be found in Colby, and he had just started up to go and ask Mr. Edwards if he knew any one, when he was startled with a crash out of the office. He looked in the direction of the noise in time to see the office-boy sprawling on the floor, with the type from the pied form lying strewed around him in little heaps.

Douglas threw up his hands in despair. He ran over to where

the boy sat rubbing his head, which had come in contact with the press, and shook him by the shoulder until his teeth rattled.

"What did you want to do that for?"

"I didn't want to do it," the boy snarled, half whining and half scared. "I didn't see that old casting."

Douglas looked at the old casting which he thought had been laid away under the trimmer. One end of it projected beyond the machine so as to be directly between the table where the forms lay and the press. He kicked it to relieve his feelings, and the boy got up, still rubbing his head, and looking at Douglas with a grieved air as if he thought the only proper thing for Douglas to do was to apologize.

"This means an all-night job for somebody," Douglas exclaimed sharply. "Well, don't stand gawping there like an idiot! Pick up those type and distribute them. I suppose you've got sense enough to shove that casting out of the way without my telling you to."

The boy muttered something that was not exactly of a devotional character, and Douglas turned to meet Edwards, who had just stepped in.

"Hello! What you doing? Breaking up housekeeping?"

"Going into housekeeping!" Douglas answered grimly. "At any rate we are prepared to serve unlimited pi."

Edwards whistled. Then he looked around the office.

"Never rains but it pours. Coleman's gone, I see. Heard of the move just made by Bartlett? They're starting a campaign sheet to beat out the Beacon, and they've got Coleman to do their presswork. Just heard of the plan and ran in to tell you of it."

"If you can spare time to talk over the matter a few moments, I'll be grateful," Douglas said gravely. "I'll be with you directly."

Edwards went over to the desk and sat down, while Douglas got down by the boy, who was sitting on the floor picking up the type with one hand and rubbing an ink-daubed fist into his eyes.

"Everybody jabs it into me!" the boy sobbed.

Douglas had repented of his loss of temper the moment he spoke sharply. The sight of the disconsolate, ink-spattered figure on the floor recalled his own apprenticeship, when the seniors had made life a burden to him in the college printing office in his freshman year.

"I'm sorry I spoke as I did, George. I lost my temper. If you'll call it quits, the next time your grandmother dies I'll close up the office and we'll go to the ball game together."

"No! Will you?" asked the boy, a grin instantly irradiating his mottled features. "That's all right, Mr. Douglas. You're a trump. That Coleman never was sorry for nothing. Lucky he quit. I was getting ready to run him through the press and make a special edition of him. I'll help you get the paper out in time."

The boy began clawing up the type with ludicrous haste, and Douglas, with a smile on his face, got up. He laid a hand on the boy's head.

"That's all right. We'll manage it somehow."

"I'll stay by the Beacon, Mr. Douglas. If you want me to work all night, I don't care; I can live without sleep if you furnish coffee and grub."

"All right, George. I'll be glad to furnish both," said Douglas with a laugh, as he walked over to his desk.

Edwards explained in a few words the plan of the mayor and his friends, as far as he knew it.

The whole affair had been kept very quiet, and it had evidently been a part of the plan to call Coleman out of the Beacon office at a time when his going would embarrass Douglas the most.

"It is the talk on the street that Coleman has been offered twice what the Beacon paid, to work on the new paper. I don't know how true it is. But in any case they are evidently ready to use their slush fund liberally."

Douglas was thoughtfully silent. He was quite calm now, and master of himself. The situation was growing decidedly interesting.

"The question for me, of course, is, where to get a pressman.

Coleman was an unusually good hand for a county newspaper. Do you know where I can get any one? I ought by rights to have two helpers."

"I don't know anyone in Colby," Edwards replied, slowly. "I'll wire over to Clinton and see if we can find anyone there."

"The Beacon has got to be out on time, if George and I have to do it all alone," said Douglas doggedly. He began to feel as he sometimes used to, during his college course, when he faced some particularly difficult problem in the matter of pulling through financially. Edwards cheerfully nodded encouragement.

"Good for you! Don't let the gang beat you. I'll wire right over to Clinton. Meanwhile, if my clerks can help in any way, you're welcome to any one of them. I don't see how you can manage the thing, but if you think you can——"

"I think so, Mr. Edwards. Much obliged for your offer. I'll accept help for running the press tonight. George has promised to stand by." He quoted the boy's statement about "coffee and grub."

"Mrs. Edwards will have something to say as to that," Edwards shouted, as he darted out of the office. "I'll let you know at once, as soon as I hear from Clinton."

Douglas went back to the little desk and sat down a moment. The little clock on top of the desk said half past nine. This was Thursday. If he worked all day and all night, used some extra plate matter that he had saved up for the next week, and left out some of the local items he had planned to run in, he reckoned he could get the paper off to the press and into the mailing sacks by Friday afternoon. The letter from the mother to Mr. Vernon, together with the editorials alluding to the sermon, had been in the form pied by the boy. Douglas was determined not to leave these out. He went over to the case and began to work at once, giving directions at the same time to George. A nervous excitement made his whole body tingle at first. After a few moments this feeling passed away, leaving his muscles firm, hard,

and enduring. His eye glowed with the fire of his inward purpose, and his mind was clear, strong, and active.

He had never felt more capable of sustained and continuous effort. At ten o'clock Edwards came in a moment to say with evident disappointment, "I wired over to Clinton, but no chance for anyone there. What do you think? Can you make it?"

"Have to."

"Bartlett is boasting that he will have the Beacon broken up in two weeks. That's the talk on the streets."

"We go to press as usual tomorrow morning." Douglas never paused in the steady click, click of type, and there was a light in his eye that the mayor had once seen there.

"Better lock your door. The crowd will be coming round to bother you if you don't," Edwards suggested. Two or three curious idlers had already stepped in. Douglas nodded to Edwards.

"All right. I'll have to do that, I guess."

"You'll need some lunch at noon and tonight. I'll send word to Julia and have some doughnuts and coffee sent over. When you hear two loud raps followed by three soft ones open the door. Two raps for coffee and three for doughnuts."

"But I don't feel as if Mrs. Edwards ought to be——"

"You let us run the commissary department, young man, and don't say a word," Edwards shouted as he went out. At the door he turned and called out so that the loafers in the office took the hint, "Better lock up, Douglas. You haven't time to discuss crops or politics this morning."

The men went out and Douglas shut the door, locked it, drew the shade down over the windows that opened on the street and then worked as he never had worked in all his life before. It was hot, and the little office soon became almost unbearable; but he kept on steadily, smiling occasionally at the sight of the boy, who entered into the contest of the Beacon against time with a perspiring enthusiasm

that got in the way as much as it helped, but was so unmistakably genuine that Douglas had not a word to say by way of criticism or rebuke.

Just before twelve there came two loud raps on the door, followed by three soft ones.

"Lunch time," said Douglas.

George darted to the door, unlocked it, spoke a word to somebody there, shut and locked the door, and came staggering back into the office with a big basket.

"Who brought the basket?" asked Douglas, as the boy set it down on the desk and began to open it.

"Some kid! Hi! This is fine! Look here! Cold chicken, sandwiches, doughnuts, apple pie!" (The last with a whoop that might have been heard out on the sidewalk.)

"Say, Mr. Douglas, do you board at Mr. Edwards?"

"No," said Douglas, as he and the boy spread out the generous lunch and began to eat.

"Why don't you?"

"I haven't been asked to," replied Douglas, smiling.

"I wouldn't wait for an invitation," said the boy, as he swallowed his third glass of lemonade.

"Better be careful, I can't afford to employ a doctor until after we've got the Beacon out, anyway."

"Huh!" The boy paused with a chicken leg between his teeth. "Do you think Mr. Edwards sent this lunch over for us to look at?"

"Hardly," said Douglas, laughing. He remembered his own boyhood, and divided the apple pie in two parts, and gave George the larger section.

"Do you think we're going to get her out on time, Mr. Douglas?" asked the boy, between mouthfuls.

"I think so, but it will be an all-night stand. Are you good for it?"

"Am I? Mr. Douglas, when Cleary run the Beacon, he was so lazy

he spent the first part of the week out on the sidewalk, or in the saloons, giving the President of the United States pointers on how to run the country. Then 'bout Thursday night, he'd get in here and raise Jericho 'cause the paper wa'n't being got out. I've turned that press many a time till the roosters crowed, and I was so sleepy I couldn't eat."

"You must have been pretty sleepy."

"I was the next door to an Egyptian mummy, Mr. Douglas! But I'd give anything to beat that Coleman. Say, Mr. Douglas! Do you suppose we'll get any supper?"

"Are you thinking about supper already?" asked Douglas, speaking severely.

"We ought not to put off thinking of a good thing until it's too late, Mr. Douglas," quoth George, as he washed down the pie with another glass of lemonade.

Douglas laughed, as he gathered up the dishes and put them back into the basket. Then back to the work with renewed energy.

The hot afternoon wore away rapidly. Several times persons tried the door, and finding it locked, thumped on it, but Douglas paid no attention. Once someone came and called out to him. He stopped long enough to go to the door.

"Getting on all right, eh?" it was the encouraging voice of Edwards.

"Yes, I think we'll have it all right. That was a fine lunch Mrs. Edwards sent over. We're very thankful for it."

"All right. Supper will be ready in the dining car at six o'clock. Is the boy's appetite good?"

"It's in good repair."

"All right. We'll try to keep him from fainting away. Good-bye and success to you. I'll send Banks over after supper to help on the presswork."

Douglas expressed his grateful thanks and went back to the case.

Without any resting he kept on making up the forms and using George at every possible gap. At six a second lunch arrived even more tempting than the first. A short note from Mrs. Edwards lay on the top of the dishes.

"I'm sorry I couldn't get you some ice-cream, but I enclose a watermelon, which has been in the refrigerator all day. I hope you will succeed in getting the paper out on time, as you are trying to do. Mr. Edwards and myself are very much interested in your plans, and we believe in you thoroughly."

Douglas felt a choking as he read the friendly note.

"Well, this is what I call a Waldorf-Astoria sort of a time," said the boy, as he set out the various good things on the desk. When the watermelon was reached he uttered a yell of delight.

"Say, Mr. Douglas! Let's fix to have a run on the Beacon every week. My! Look at that! Lemon pie this time! Coleman didn't know what he missed. I'll tell him all right next time I see him!"

When the supper was disposed of, back to the case again, and then as the forms were ready, the presswork began. At eight o'clock Banks came from Edwards' store. The three perspiring figures were hard at it when, at ten o'clock, something went wrong with the press, and everything had to stop while Douglas hunted for the cause of the trouble.

It took him over an hour to make repairs on a broken pinion. It was so far along in the night by that time, and so hot and close in the office, that he unlocked the door and threw it open, together with all the windows.

The refreshing night air put new energy into the little force that was running a race against time and the Bartlett organ, but as Douglas contemplated the work that yet remained unfinished, he had his grave misgivings. There were still several columns to set up. His press was an old Gordon Simplex and printed one page on the reverse of the patent inside. He could use the regular page for the fourth side; but

he was ambitious, if it could possibly be done, to use his own composition, and especially all the local matter he had prepared before Coleman went out.

At half past eleven a man came in with another lunch from Mrs. Edwards.

"Suppose there is enough for three?" asked the boy, glancing somewhat jealously at Mr. Banks.

"If there isn't, of course you'll have to wait until morning," said Mr. Banks, winking hard at Douglas.

"You don't belong on the Beacon; Mr. Douglas and I are running it," said George, as he opened up the basket.

"You and Mr. Douglas you mean."

"There's plenty," said George, as he emptied the basket. "Mr. Edwards is a brick hotel. I know now why he is so everlastingly good-natured. Any man that gets such grub as this all the time, hasn't got no kick ready. If I had such grub as this, my disposition would be different."

"Yes, you would have a disposition to dyspepsia," said Banks.

The lunch had been set out on the desk, and the three tired workers were about to begin, when there came abruptly into the office a most remarkable figure, so remarkable in appearance, that Douglas and Banks, and even the boy, stared in silent astonishment at him.

At first sight he looked like a tramp who had been sitting for one of Mr. Opper's pictures. He was covered with dust, his clothes were in rags, he had no hat, and there was a streak across one cheek that might have been dried blood. On one foot he wore a tennis shoe, and on the other a part of a riding boot with a yellow legging, held on with two buttons.

He stood silently returning the look of astonishment that greeted him, and Douglas finally said, "What do you want?"

"Got anything to drink?" the man asked with some hesitation, in sharp contrast to his entrance; but Douglas noted the hungry look the man gave the food on the desk.

"Won't you join us, brother?" Douglas gave the invitation simply but heartily. One of the things the president of Lincoln College had taught him was a belief in the human brotherhood.

The man stared, and did not even move when Douglas got up and put another chair near the desk. George muttered, "This ain't no reception;" but Douglas frowned and repeated his invitation.

"Sit down and join us. We'll be glad to have you."

The man slowly moistened his lips.

"I will, if you'll give me something to do to pay for it."

"All right. I don't know that I've got anything to do."

"Might shovel the snow off the sidewalk," George suggested, as he mopped the perspiration on his face with an inky sleeve.

"I'm a printer," said the man, briefly.

"You are!" Douglas looked at him closely. The man gave him a shrewd glance in return, and smiled slightly.

"I don't look it much, but I'll prove it."

He stepped up to the case, and began setting type with great rapidity.

"Hadn't we better begin now, Mr. Douglas?" whispered the boy anxiously. "There won't be no show for us if that old guy comes in. These tramp printers is regular giraffes to eat."

"Keep still," said Douglas. There was something almost uncanny in the way the man looked as he stood at the case. When his stickful was finished, he brought it to Douglas and said:

"Read it out loud if you want to."

Douglas read slowly:

I've tramped it east, and I've tramped it west;
I've gone to worst from better and best;
I haven't a friend beneath the sun,
And I don't know where I can get me one;
I've lost my home, and I've lost my way,
And I don't care whether it's night or day;
I've lost my soul along with my hat,
But a man's a man for all of that.

"A tramp poet!" muttered George. "I pity the grub now."

Douglas did not know whether to laugh or to do something else. The typesetting was perfect. It had been done with a swiftness he had never seen in any office.

"Can you give me a job?" asked the man, and his look again traveled hurriedly towards the food.

"Yes," said Douglas.

The word was scarcely uttered before the stranger was seated, and eating.

"I say!" exclaimed George, "deal fair."

"If you had been without anything to eat as long as I have you wouldn't be too particular about etiquette," said the man grimly.

"There's plenty for all of us," replied Douglas, looking severely at the boy. But he was fascinated with the stranger's looks, and even when his hunger was appeased and he sat back, because he could eat no more, he presented such a starved, disreputable appearance, that the others eyed him with something of the same astonishment they felt at his sudden entrance.

"Are you ready to begin work now?" Douglas asked, with a brief word of explanation concerning the need of getting out the paper before tomorrow morning.

"Now or never," answered the stranger.

"Your name?"

"You can call me 'Quits.' It ain't my name, but it's what I go by."

Douglas had no time to ask questions. The man was evidently familiar with the work in a newspaper office, and he had appeared at a time of need. Douglas gave him copy, and the man, without a word, went to work. His rapidity astonished even the boy.

"He's a regular machine. He looks like the devil's own picture, Mr. Douglas. Don't you think the thermometer's gone up since he came in?"

"He knows his business all right," Douglas muttered in astonishment. "We'll go to press on time now."

When morning dawned the Beacon was ready for mailing. Before noon the entire edition was ready for the mail delivery. Colby people received their papers just as if nothing had happened to disturb the regular routine of the office, and there was astonished chagrin in the ranks of the mayor's following.

Edwards came in just as Douglas was preparing to close up and go over to his boarding house for a nap.

"The Beacon is a hummer! The best we ever had. How you did it beats me. Colby is wild over it."

Douglas nodded at Quits.

"I've engaged his services indefinitely. I'm going to take him over to Mrs. Wycoff's now and get him dressed up a little. He's all right as a printer. I don't know him in any other capacity."

He introduced Mr. Edwards. That gentleman had never heard of him, but he greeted him cordially and congratulated Douglas.

"Those lunches pulled us through, tell Mrs. Edwards. We're tempted to get caught again."

"All right. You know where to go for your commissariat if you do."

Douglas took Quits to the boarding house, and when he came out of the little room late in the afternoon, washed and shaved, and clothed in a cast-off suit of the late Mr. Wycoff, he was so changed that Douglas did not know him, and passed him without a word in the little hall.

"Hope you had a good nap," said Quits, respectfully.

Douglas stared. Then he recognized him.

"O, yes. And you?"

"All right," Quits answered briefly.

He was a very silent person, was Quits, and during the next few days, during which Douglas discovered that he had secured a remarkable pressman for the Beacon, Quits was so taciturn that Douglas barely learned a few facts about him. Moreover, it was a very busy week for the Beacon, and Douglas was so occupied that he had little thought to give to anything but the paper.

Subscriptions were coming in encouragingly. But in a growing measure he began to feel the strength of the opposition. Two of the largest merchants refused to renew their advertisements. After praying over the matter, Douglas had finally decided to drop the patent medicine ads., or at least all of them that were evidently disreputable. Reckoning up the value of these discarded ads. to the Beacon, he was astonished to find that unless he could make good their absence by local advertisements, he would have to print the paper at a loss with his present subscription list. It was another entrance through "The Narrow Gate," but once having decided, he did not hesitate. The new campaign sheet sent out by the machine boldly challenged the policy of the Beacon, and appealed to the voters to stand by the organization. It also appealed to all the selfish interests of the merchants to license the saloons in Colby, and put the finances of the town on a "business basis."

Thursday night Douglas came down to the office after supper to see that matters were in shape for going to press. Everything this week so far had been ideal. Quits and George had struck up a friendship that promised to be remarkable.

"That Coleman was a snail on a hearse by the side of Quits, Mr. Douglas. And he ain't all the time jabbing slugs at me, neither, like Coleman used to do. Nor talking me to death. Quits is a double-leaded leader by the side of Coleman."

When Douglas went in, Quits was not there. George was busy getting the press ready.

"Where's Quits?" asked Douglas.

"I dunno. He ain't been here this evening."

"I'm going over to the church meeting tonight, George. Mr. Vernon is going to organize an independent voters' club at the prayer meeting. I'll be back about half past nine."

"All right. You needn't come back. Quits and I can get her out."

"I'll be here at nine thirty," Douglas answered with a smile.

George strolled to the door a moment to look up the street and see if Quits was coming. He stood there a moment, and suddenly Douglas heard him exclaim:

"Did you know that Quits drank, Mr. Douglas?"

"No," Douglas replied, somewhat startled. "Does he?"

"Regular fish."

"I never saw him go near a saloon."

"He's going into one now."

"Where?" Douglas seized his hat and went to the door.

"There; at Jake's place." George pointed up the street to a figure just going into the saloon opposite the little hotel.

Without a word Douglas went out and up the street to the saloon. As he entered it there was a prayer in his heart that he might save this life from the curse that lay on it. Yet, will you tell us, Christian voter, how to save tempted souls if we pray, but do not act? If Douglas had foreseen all that was to befall him that eventful night, he would not have dared enter. As he went in only a few minutes behind his pressman, the night was deepening for them both.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Douglas pushed aside the swinging screen door of "Jake's Place" and went in, there were a dozen men in front of the bar. He looked hurriedly along the line, but Quits was not there.

Without hesitation he went right up to the bar and inquired of the bartender: "Have you seen the pressman of the Beacon office here this evening?"

"No, I haven't," the man answered instantly.

Douglas knew he was lying and his blood boiled. Back of all his intense hatred of the saloon and everything it stood for, was a never-dying memory of a ruined home and a tortured mother. Is it any wonder, O you cool-blooded voters who believe in "regulating" the liquor business, that the young editor of the Beacon was and is a "fanatic" on the subject of the extermination of Hell's best paying business on earth?

"I saw him come in here a few minutes ago. You say he has not been in here?" Douglas looked the barkeeper in the face, and the man turned angrily around and called out to Jake, the proprietor, who was at the other end of the bar.

"Say, Jake, has the Beacon's pressman been in here tonight?"

Jake came up to the end of the bar where Douglas stood. The men in the saloon turned from their places and stared in various degrees of interest at Douglas.

"Your pressman ain't in here," said Jake, a heavy-faced man, regarding Douglas insolently.

"I didn't ask if he was here now. I asked if he had been in here this evening."

"And what if he has? Is it any of your business?"

Douglas turned to the men who were ranged alongside of the bar.

"Have any of you men seen the pressman of the Beacon here this evening?"

"I saw him go out, never saw him come in," answered an old man, standing at the farther end of the bar. Douglas instantly walked over to where he stood. Jake and his barkeeper walked down to that end of the bar at the same time.

"Where did he go out?" asked Douglas.

The man hesitated, but his eyes looked towards a door at the rear of the saloon, just outside the bar, leading into a back room.

Jake broke in: "It's none of your business where he went."

"Did he go out through there?" Douglas asked the man who had volunteered to give the information about the pressman.

The man hesitated and then nodded. Douglas stepped around the end of the bar, and was about to push open the door, but Jake went out through a door just behind the bar which opened into the back room, and opened the door leading into the saloon, and thereby confronted Douglas.

"Keep out of here! This is a private room!"

Douglas stopped and calmly said, "Is the pressman in there? If he is, I want to see him."

The saloon-keeper paused. Douglas heard a door open and shut.

"This is a private room. You can't come in here," the man said, still blocking up the doorway.

"Will you tell the pressman I want to see him?"

The man hesitated, then suddenly stepped back and said with a sneer, "Look in if you want to. He isn't here."

Douglas instantly went in, and not pausing in the room, which was empty, he went over to the outside door and threw it open. He looked up and down the alley, but it had grown dark rapidly and he could see nothing.

Without a word to the saloon-keeper he went through the saloon and out on the street. After a moment's indecision he went quickly back to the office.

George was there alone.

"Has Quits been here yet?"

"Hasn't been around."

Douglas waited a few moments and then made his decision.

"I'm going out to hunt him up. I don't know how long I'll be gone. But I'm going to find Quits if the Beacon never goes to press at all this week."

"If I only could set up copy, Mr. Douglas, I'd yell 'thirty' on the Beacon before midnight."

"I want you to stay right here, George, and if Quits turns up drunk before I get back, send me word if possible. I'm going to every saloon in town, beginning with the Wayside Inn, and coming down through Main street."

"All right, Mr. Douglas, I'll do anything I can. But what will I do with him if he's primed?"

"Keep him here if possible. But I don't think he'll come back here if he has been the rounds."

Douglas began his search by going into the Wayside Inn, a notorious place, where for years a gambling annex had flourished. Colby, being the county seat of a rich farming section, furnished more materials for saloons and gambling establishments than might at first sight have seemed possible. Douglas was simply appalled as he went into the saloons and gambling establishments that night, to note the swarms of young men, not only from the town, but from the country. In one place on the main street, not three blocks from the Methodist Church,

he counted no less than thirty-five young men and boys, the oldest of whom was not more than twenty years of age.

The billiard rooms connected with the saloons also were crowded with players, all of them smoking, many of them young men from the farms, and evidently learning for the first time not only how to play billiards, but to play the game of lost manhood. Douglas found his blood at fever heat as he watched all this human tragedy, and reflected that the cool, complaisant, smiling bartenders represented the one business of the United States that of set purpose deliberately makes more money for less labor than any other form of barter known to the human race; and his soul felt volcanic at the thought of the men, who after two thousand years of Jesus Christ in the world, vote year after year to license the most gigantic sin of civilization, simply because it is political or financial policy to do so. What! shall we bolt the party? Shall we offend the rich brewers and distillers who can furnish so many votes for the success of the party? Of course, the saloon is bad, and excessive drinking is bad, and drunkenness is vulgar, and it would be better not to have the saloon. But it is an evil that must be "regulated." License it, and make it pay heavily for current expenses. But it is a form of human passion that cannot be prohibited. Let us regulate it and not say so much about it. In any case, our party must not be disturbed. It will not do to intrude radical measures about the saloon into our great national or state conventions. It will cost us votes. Neither is it the place of the preacher to agitate about the saloon from the pulpit. Let him stick to the gospel. The pulpit is not the place for politics. Let the pulpit stand for the simple gospel. When we business men go to church we are tired; we don't want to be stirred up over these questions, we don't want to have our minds agitated over politics. We get all we want of that during the week, Sunday we want to be soothed with a comforting gospel, led to thoughts of heaven and the future reward and eternal life. Don't worry over this old question of prohibition. You cannot prohibit any-

way. Give us the gospel on Sunday, and we will support the gospel liberally. But we will not support politics in the pulpit.

And will you tell us, Christian voters of America, how many pulpits in America are giving the business men a "soothing gospel" of generalities and platitudes and rhetoric for fear of offending the rich and influential pew-holders, while what the business men in all the saloons, states, and cities need is an earthquake of applied gospel from the pulpit on the sin of licensing the saloon, an earthquake of applied gospel that shall make it so disturbing for the business man and voter, that either he or the prophet in the pulpit will have to resign from that church or work together at the prayer-meeting and the polls for the extermination of the world's greatest public enemy?

Douglas had gone in eight of the ten saloons but had not found Quits. In two saloons he found trace of him, but he had just gone out. In every saloon Douglas found the usual appalling crowd of young men. He calculated the probable number of men, old and young, in the prayer-meeting at all the churches in Colby that night compared with the number in the saloons. There were ten saloons and fifteen churches.

When he had finally made the rounds of every saloon without finding the pressman, it was half-past nine. He came out on the street sick at heart over the things he had seen and doubtful what to do next. Finally he decided to go back once more to the Wayside Inn, acting on a word dropped by one saloon frequenter that Quits may have gone back there.

He went in, and found the place crowded, but the pressman was not there. After waiting a few moments he went out. As he was leaving, he heard loud talking at the farther end of the bar, and noticed two young men who had evidently been drinking heavily quarreling over something. Their angry voices rose higher every minute, and Douglas was relieved to step out on the sidewalk and escape the sight and sound of their drunken folly.

He walked slowly down towards the office, and as he was going by the Methodist church, which was on the way, he saw lights still burning in the chapel, where Mr. Vernon was holding his meeting for the organization of his Good Citizenship Club.

He stopped in front of the church, debating with himself about going in to see Mr. Vernon. As he stood there he heard loud voices down the street in the direction of the Wayside Inn.

There was an electric light hanging over the street at the corner below the church, and as Douglas looked in the direction of the voices he saw two figures coming up the street. Under the street lamp they paused, and Douglas saw them swaying together striking at each other. They separated and staggered along, cursing, until they were opposite the church. There one of them stooped as if to pick up something in the street to use as a weapon.

What happened next all occurred so quickly, it was so terrible in its results, so entirely unexpected and unforeseen, that Douglas was wholly unprepared for it. There was a flash, a loud report followed by another and another. The figure that had been stooping fell face forward in the street. The other stood still a moment, then turned and ran in the direction of the saloon.

Even then Douglas could hardly realize that a tragedy had been enacted within a few feet of him. With an involuntary cry for help, however, he ran into the street and kneeled down by the form that lay there. The church door opened and several persons came out. Douglas, still kneeling by the unconscious figure, called out, "Mr. Vernon, there's been a shooting affair here! Call help at once!"

Doors opened at the different houses near-by. People began to come out into the street. Down near the saloon another group gathered. Someone said, "They've caught the man that did the shooting."

Vernon ran over and kneeled down beside Douglas. As they turned the figure over from its position face downwards, and Vernon caught the first glimpse of the face, he exclaimed, "Good God! Doug-

las! This is Mrs. Lane's boy! I called on him yesterday, and he promised to come out to the meeting tonight. He never came, and I was going around to his boarding-place in the morning. This is terrible!"

They carried the boy into the church vestibule and laid him down on some pew cushions. He was still breathing, but was unconscious. A great crowd, excited and full of questions began to gather. A doctor was examining the wounds. Douglas and Vernon kept the crowd out of the church vestibule where the boy lay. A carriage had been sent for, and a messenger dispatched to that lonely farm to notify the mother of her boy's injury.

Douglas and Vernon, with one or two others, quickly and silently obeyed the doctor's few directions. There had been no doubt in the doctor's mind from the moment he saw the pistol wounds.

Every shot had taken effect. Two of the three were dangerous, one of them fatal. The crowd outside the church was growing clamorous. There were shouts of "Hang the murderer!"

Some of the crowd started down towards the saloon, in front of which, it was rumored, the young man who did the shooting had been caught. As a matter of fact he had been arrested there, and had been taken to the county jail, where the sheriff was guarding him for fear of a lynching.

Fifteen minutes went by, and it was growing more difficult to keep the mob out of the church. Some of Mr. Vernon's parishioners were holding them back with difficulty, expostulating and pleading to give the doctor room for his work, when he slowly rose, together with Douglas and the minister.

"It's all over," the doctor said briefly. The news spread to the crowd like lightning It stunned everyone at first; then some of them shouted, "Let's hang the murderer!" and the entire mob rushed down to the saloon, and from there to the county jail, leaving Douglas, Vernon, the doctor and the group of church people with the dead boy.

Douglas and Vernon stared at each other, white-lipped and trembling.

"One more! Only one more of the thousands of others in Christian America. O God! How long! how long shall we continue to license murder for the sake of the revenue! We build our cities with blood and our nation is drunk for greed." Vernon spoke sternly and Douglas, unmanned by the swift and awful event, put his hands over his face and groaned as he sat there, the image of that boy on the blood-soaked cushions, mingling in his mind with his own mother's agony over a ruined home. "Fanatics," these two? Yes, verily. The sin of America is apathy in the face of murder, not of this lad, for he is only one of thousands, but murder daily and yearly committed in the name of political selfishness and the worship of mammon. When this republic has a few more fanatics like these two, it will perhaps be conscious of its awful guilt in accepting the revenue of blood, and pray a just and merciful God to pardon the wrong of centuries and smite the saloon into oblivion.

They carried the body over to the undertaker's, and Mr. Vernon stayed there until the messenger who had been sent for the mother, arrived with her. It was morning when the woman came in, almost crazy with apprehension and grief.

The minister silently led her into the room where her boy lay. There with God alone the minister witnessed a sorrow which could never be revealed. And will God not recompense? Shall all these mothers' and widows' tears and heartbroken sobs avail nothing in His sight?

Though the years pass slowly on,
  And the greed of gold consume
The nation's heart and brain,
Yet He sits upon the throne,
  Who will speak the final doom,
And He will not speak again;
His arm shall be made bare,
When his vengeance smiteth there;
  The lust of a nation's pride,

Shall grow to a swelling tide,
But He who has waited long
For the sons of men to turn
From the world's contemptuous sin,
Shall shackle the ages' wrong,
And the chaff in the fire shall burn
When His Judgment shall begin;
But the tears of His children shall be
Wiped away eternally.

Down around the county jail that night several efforts were made to break into the jail and take out the prisoner. But the mob was not organized and the sheriff, with a posse of deputies, kept the crowd back until reinforcements came over from Clinton. Toward daybreak the mob grew weary and gradually dispersed, and there was no further attempt made the next day.

Colby awoke that morning to some sense of the tragedy. It was not the first by any means. Mr. Vernon, in his Sunday morning sermon reminded his congregation of that fact.

"I find," he said, after a graphic account of the scene on Thursday night, "on looking up the records here, that during the last ten years Anderson county has on its roll of crime, due to the saloon, over 400 cases, including assault with intent to kill; seven murders, nearly every one of them as brutal as this one, together with arrests for drunkenness, where no crime was committed, that sum up the total to nearly 1,000 cases. Does this sound appalling for one county? Yet there are your records. Do you know how much the saloon is responsible for in America?

"The United States Commissioner of labor, Hon. Carroll D. Wright, gives the amount of license money received from saloons in one year by 118 largest cities of the United States, all having a population of over 30,000. The total amount is $24,091,396. These cities have 58,226 saloons, which make the average saloon license money collected from saloons by cities, towns and villages under 30,000 population, $75,000,000, making a total sum of $100,000,000 collected by cities and villages,

which must be added to the $183,419,571.67 paid to the Federal Government.

"Every cent of these millions is stained with blood, wet with tears, soiled with impurity, stamped with dishonor and blazoned with ruined character. Every dollar of this revenue is taken from honest industry, and wrested from childhood's needs and woman's chastity. It has all passed through the sea of debauchery, crime and anguish before it drops dripping into the treasury of the United States government. If this Federal Government whiskey revenue money could speak, as it is taken out of a saloon till and paid over to the government, the voice of its combined wail of anguish, of its shriek of tortured childhood, its groan of lost life would rise up to heaven out of the world's hell, and its awful roar of pain would drown all other voices and bid the universe be aghast at the real tragedy of the century, which all the little novelists of the petty historical stories that deluge the world-reading public have ignored, while their puerile pens scratched away at make-believe history. Out there in the street in front of the church was some real history the other night. Out on a lonely farm is some real history in the blasted life of that woman, who yesterday saw the earth drop on the coffin containing her boy, killed while drunk. Out there in the vestibule of the church are some stains on the floor, that I hope to God will stay there long enough to preach their history to every boy here to-day. And yet in spite of all this tragedy, which the easy little novelists of this age pass by to describe the millinery of a hundred years ago, I venture to predict that this town will go on licensing the cause of the stream of death. After the present wide spread excitement has died down, matters will go on as usual. You will vote with the old party; the criminal lawyers will enter for their client a plea of self-defence, he will escape either scot-free, or with a mild sentence, just as four out of seven murderers in Anderson county have escaped, and the saloon will settle down to its life-destroying business again. I make this prediction." At this point Mr. Vernon was interrupted by cries all over the church, "No! No!"

Women were sobbing, men's faces were pale and stern. Mr. Vernon waited. When it was silent again, he raised his arm and said impressively: "It rests with you, men and women of Colby, to prove me a false prophet. Pray God my prediction may prove untrue. But we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. God give us the victory."

That was an exciting day in Colby. The First Methodist was stirred as never before. Judge Butler's comment on the sermon was, "I call it incendiary." Mr. Edwards' comment was, "Just what Colby needs." Men and women were divided. All were agitated. The tragedy had struck home deep. For the time being, at least, the people felt the lesson and took it to heart.

The excitement and nervous strain through which Douglas passed made it physically impossible for him to get out the Beacon that week. Quits did not appear, and he had vanished so completely that no one in Colby knew anything about him. A few days afterwards, one of the brakemen on the fast freight that stopped at Colby, spoke of a tramp who had boarded the train that Thursday night under peculiar circumstances, and his description tallied with Quits' appearance, but no word came from Quits himself.

Friday and Saturday of that eventful week Douglas was nearly prostrated, and unable to do anything on the paper. He was called as a principal witness before the coroner's jury, and testified about the shooting. He was positive as to the facts. The whole affair had occurred only a few feet from him, but he had not seen the face distinctly, owing to the shadows cast by the electric lights. The fact, however, was proved, that the young man captured by the police had come running from the scene of the shooting. The revolver was identified as his own. A score of witnesses, including Douglas, were able to swear positively to the quarrel the two men had been having in the saloon before they went out on the street. So the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of "Came to his death by pistol wounds inflicted by some person not known or proved," and

the case was turned over to the district court, and the person of the young man, who everyone knew had committed the crime, remanded to the county jail to await trial at the September term of court.

The Monday after Mr. Vernon's sermon, which followed that remarkable week in Douglas' experience, found the editor of the Beacon hard at work on the paper. And, beginning with that morning, and continuing for three days, the office of the little paper witnessed a series of mishaps and accidents, that gave the young editor a feeling more like despair than he had ever known.

The press worked badly, and broke down altogether Tuesday morning,when the prospect seemed good to get at least half an edition off. Then George pied another form, and capped the climax by smashing one hand in the trimmer doing some job work which had been sent in. Everything, however, came to a standstill when the press went wrong, and Douglas stayed up all night Tuesday to make repairs, only to find that it was useless without a part of the press which Colby could not furnish, and which he finally had to get from Clinton, after expensive telegraphing and express charges. Mr. Edwards volunteered all sorts of help, but even the most enthusiastic and boundless friendships could not run the press, nor railroad the papers out to their subscribers.

Wednesday night the press was started up again, and prospects were good for getting the paper off at last, when Douglas discovered three columns of plate matter bottom side up, an error he never knew to occur before, and outside the experience of printer man so far as he knew. The entire edition was thrown out, and he began all over, for he was getting tremendously aroused now, and all his pugnacious instincts, which were strong rather than impulsive, were stirred in him by these accidents.

Thursday night found him still wrestling with the press, and with only half the edition ready for mailing out. George limped around the office with his hand tied up in a rag that looked as if it had been torn from the corner of the office towel. With all the other things the boy

had succeeded in doing after smashing his hand he had dropped the galley-proof roller on his foot. His whole appearance was suggestive of an explosion in an ink factory, which had caught him climbing out of a vat; but with great good pluck he stayed by Douglas and the Beacon, and vowed he would not retire from the battlefield as long as he had a hand or foot left.

"If Quits was only here now we'd soon pull out; wouldn't we, Mr. Douglas? Where do you suppose he is?"

"I wish I knew," Douglas groaned. He was nearly exhausted, almost dead for lack of sleep; but he stumbled about the office and had no thought of leaving until the edition was all off.

It was half-past ten, and the boy had spoken again about Quits, when a step sounded on the walk, paused at the office door, and a figure came in that brought Douglas and the boy up standing and staring in astonishment.

It was Quits, who appeared minus his hat, and all covered with dust. His shirt was in rags, and his trousers hung in tatters over his feet, and this time he had no shoes. A fragment of an old arctic was on one foot, and the other was wrapped around with a torn woolen sock tied up with a cotton string.

"You're just in time, Quits," exclaimed the boy joyfully. "Where you been? Working on some meetropolitan daily and boardin' at the Waldorf?"

Douglas looked at him sternly and doubtfully. Quits did not meet his look, and presented a generally downcast and ashamed appearance.

"Where's that new suit of clothes I got for you?" he asked Quits wrathfully. It was the first thing that occurred to him to say, as he eyed the disreputable figure.

"Gone to support the liquor traffic," replied Quits calmly.

"Then I want to tell you I am not running this paper for any such purpose. What have you come round for?"

"Thought may be you might need a hand," said Quits, looking at George.

"I don't want any drunken printers around," replied Douglas shortly.

"Do you mean it?"

"I do."

"All right."

Quits turned and limped toward the door.

Something in the sight of him moved Douglas.

"Hold on. Where are you going?"

"To the devil. That's my usual destination," said Quits, without turning round.

Douglas took a stride toward him and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Will you promise—"

"Promise nothing. What's the use? I've promised God, and my wife (when I had one), and the church, and Jesus Christ, and I never kept anything. I'm willing to go to hell for a drink any time."

It was the longest speech Douglas had ever heard Quits make. It was also one of the most effective.

"If I don't give you work what will you do?"

"Go up to the Wayside and give them my wife's watch for a drink," said Quits promptly. "It's the only thing I've got now that used to be hers. I'd swap my baby's coffin for a drink any time."

"Come back," said Douglas.

Quits turned round, went up to the table where the forms lay, and put his head down on one corner where there was a clean space and sobbed like a child. The boy looked very much embarrassed, and pulled out what looked like another corner of the office towel and blew his nose with it. Douglas stood sorrowfully gazing at the human wreck that had been flung again on the little beach of the Beacon office.

At last when Quits' sobs had ceased, Douglas said, "If you want to

begin to-night, you can wash up and start in. Have you had any supper?"

"No," said Quits lifting up his head and furtively wiping his eyes on his shirt sleeve.

"Then you'd better have a bite first."

He sent George over to the hotel for a lunch, and after Quits had disposed of it with an eagerness that spoke of a long fast, Douglas put him to work again without any more questions. During the talk that followed Quits frankly related his experience, making no secret of his debauch, and also making no promises for the future.

"I'm a goner, Mr. Douglas. I killed my wife with grief, and my two children have been taken from me and adopted. I've taken every cure from the Keeley to three attempts to suicide. When I got started a week ago to-night, I went into every saloon in town, and I saw you coming in several and dodged you out of the back door.

"I got on to the fast freight at midnight and went down the road fifty miles to Bergen, then back to Clinton. I've been in Clinton most of the time. That's where I pawned my clothes. Yesterday, when my money was gone, I started back here. Got on a freight and was thrown off after a fight with the conductor. I laid out under a haystack all afternoon and tramped it up here. As long as I can keep out of the sight and smell of the saloon I'm not bad. No, I won't make any promises. I've perjured myself enough. If you want to run the risk I'll stay as long as I can. Yes, I've heard of the shooting. It's awful, but if you'd seen all I've felt and seen owing to the drink business, you wouldn't count that anything more'n one more drop in the bucket. That's all 'tis."

When the Beacon finally got to its subscribers, it was with a well written apology from the editor, explaining the failure to appear on time, and promising to make good the omission by an extra in the near future. The Bartlett organ made the most of the Beacon's troubles.

It gave an account of the shooting, and laid great emphasis on the need of better police protection.

"What Colby needs," one editorial in the organ concluded, "is a more extended and efficient police service, which will prevent the occurrence of such shocking affairs. We deplore the event as much as any one and trust it is the last; but the citizens of Colby will always be in danger unless we have a police system that is adequate to the real needs of our growing and enterprising town." (This is a quotation from an editorial recently printed in a paper published in a whiskey town, the day after an unusually brutal murder caused by a saloon brawl between two drunken boys.)

Edwards boiled over when he read this editorial. He was talking with Douglas and Vernon the day after it appeared.

"Police protection! What the citizens of Colby need is police protection from editorials like these, and from papers like the mayor's."

"Matters are going just as I told the people Sunday," remarked Vernon. "It's only a week since the shooting, and already public sentiment is divided as to the affair. The plea of self-defence has already been suggested by the mayor's organ. In this country the papers try all criminal cases weeks before the courts get them. By the time cases are in court, the entire community has taken sides one way or the other. The mayor's paper by September will be stoutly urging Rider's innocence, and declaring that when Lane stooped over it was for the purpose of picking up some weapon with which to attack Rider. The county attorney, according to common report, will make a very poor showing, and two of the shrewdest criminal lawyers have been engaged to conduct Rider's case. Meanwhile attention is being entirely diverted from the part the saloon furnished in selling these boys the liquor that made them quarrel. I shall prove to be a true prophet after all," said Vernon grimly.

"I hope not," Douglas spoke earnestly. "Do you really believe Mr. Vernon, that in the vote of license or no license this fall, the people of

Anderson county, in face of all the facts, will actually vote to continue the saloons?"

"I don't like to say, Brother Douglas," replied Mr. Vernon sadly. "But we have got to reckon with such people, for example, as the mayor, and such sentiments as these in his outrageous editorial about police protection. We have got to reckon on the narrow prejudices and passions of partisan politicians, and on the unlimited funds at the disposal of whiskey, with which they can bribe voters and courts, and legislators and newspapers, and even church members. I look on the battle between civilization and the saloon as the greatest and the most serious contest for human rights that this country knows anything about. And I am frank to confess that from what I know of my own church members, I very much doubt if the most influential voters in my church will vote no license this fall. Some of them will. But men like Judge Butler will vote the other way. He will support his party candidates. One of them is our present county attorney, a well-known whiskey sympathizer. It is notorious that he drinks, that he is on friendly terms with the brewers at Clinton, that he has repeatedly been their legal adviser, and yet as enlightened and in many respects as excellent a man as Judge Butler will vote for him this fall, simply because he is the nominee of his party, and he will vote for license because he believes it is for the financial interests of the town.

"So, then, I say when we face such facts as these, true of men in the church, we ought to make up our minds that if we succeed in carrying the election this fall against the saloon, we shall need to pray and talk and work for our lives. If we win, it will not be an easy victory."

Douglas went back to the office after this talk, with his soul aflame to do with the Beacon all that could be done for the cause of human rights.

As the weeks went by and September came on, various events plunged Douglas into experiences that kept his life in a whirl of ex-

citement and change, and his entrance into life through the Narrow Gate was signalized more than once by the mental and moral struggle that tried his growing young manhood to the extreme limit of endurance.

Among the experiences that made the year memorable to him was his responsibility for Quits.

For two weeks Quits worked on the Beacon steadily. Douglas took him to Mrs. Wycoff's, secured him another suit of clothes and kept constant watch of him. At the end of the two weeks Quits began to exhibit signs of restlessness. Douglas knew he was thinking of the saloons and talked with him about it.

"I can't stand it much longer, Mr. Douglas. This morning when we went by Jake's Place I 'most broke away. I know you're watching me. That's all right. But you can't keep me in sight always. Tell you what I wish you would do. Get a chain and tie me to the press while I'm in the office. Then you'll know where I am."

He said it grimly without a suspicion of a smile. If Douglas had taken him at his word he would probably have felt relieved. But Douglas not knowing what he had undertaken to do, determined that if it lay in his power Quits should not enter a saloon or get a drink.

But it was a physical impossibility to watch Quits day and night and when the trial came off the second week in September Douglas as the principal witness for the state was obliged to be absent from the office for the larger part of three days. During all that time, however, greatly to the relief of Douglas Quits kept steadily at work and there was a good prospect of getting out the paper, as usual.

When the trial closed at the end of the third day Douglas left the court room completely worn out by the strain. Mr. Vernon's prediction as to the line of defence on the part of Rider's lawyers was exactly true. They entered a plea of self-defence and one of the most famous criminal lawyers in the state spoke for three hours moving the jury to tears with his eloquent appeal for the acquittal of the prisoner.

The jury went out and the court waited for its verdict. Douglas anticipating what it would be went over to the office. It was then about six.

The moment he entered, he knew from the boy's looks that Quits had gone.

"I couldn't keep him," George wailed. "I tried to get word to you but nobody could get near the court house door, there was such a jam."

"Which way did he go?" asked Douglas.

"Up to the Wayside."

Douglas instantly started out. As he went up the street he heard cheering over towards the court house. Some one overtook him.

"Heard the verdict? Rider's acquitted. The jury was out only ten minutes. That speech did the business. My! But wasn't it great!"

"Great!" indeed, Douglas thought as he hurried on. Every saloon man in Colby would hold jubilation tonight. The jury was impaneled by the county attorney. They were twelve "tried men and true" according to the law, yet Douglas clenched his hands as he called up that double row of men and saw faces there that he had seen in the saloons, habitual frequenters, on that night when the shooting occurred. Mr. Vernon's prophecy seemed to be coming true. Would the county go for license also? His heart sank as he went on borne down by the sense of sin's great load and of evil's great power.

When Douglas entered the Wayside Inn an excited crowd was lined up at the bar drinking Rider's health. Quits was not there. Douglas satisfied himself of that fact and went out to the other saloons

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A case almost exactly parallel to this was tried in a license state a few weeks ago. The result was an acquittal on a plea of self-defense of one of the most cold blooded murders in the state. That same evening in every saloon in the town where the murder was committed the whiskey men celebrated the murderer's acquittal with a special jubilation and the papers made mention of the fact as a piece of news.

but did not find him. Then impelled by some strange impulse he went over to his little room at his boarding place and found Quits dead drunk on his bed.

When Quits recovered from his drunk next morning he was sick for three days. Douglas nursed him, but said not one word. At the end of the last day, Quits went down on his knees and with groans and tears and unearthly cries begged Douglas to go out and get him a bottle of whiskey. Douglas locked the door, asked Mrs. Wycoff to watch the windows and went out to get Mr. Vernon.

The minister came and for two hours prayed and worked over Quits who raved and cursed like a lost soul. At the end of that time he became quiet and before Mr. Vernon went away he had fallen asleep.

He slept for twelve hours and when he awoke, he asked to see Mr. Vernon again.

When the minister came, Quits said, while his face expressed unutterable longing,

"Mr. Vernon, do you believe Jesus Christ can save a man like me?"

"He is able to save to the uttermost, Brother."

"But I'm too far gone."

"He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." "Whosoever will may come."

"But nothing can save me from the power of drink! When I go by the saloons it seems as if all the imps of hell were reaching out after me."

"But listen to what Jesus says, my Brother: 'My sheep hear my voice and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them unto me is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.' Do you believe that? Do you believe Jesus spoke the truth?"

"Yes, yes," replied Quits while his face worked convulsively. "But do you really think He can keep me? me, Mr. Vernon?"

"'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.' The Lord has saved greater sinners than you. Why can He not save you?"

"Then you really think He can?"

"I know it. There is no limit to His forgiving power."

Quits put his face in his hands. The tears ran down his cheeks.

"Pray for me, Mr. Vernon," he sobbed.

"I'll pray with you, Brother," Mr. Vernon answered gently.

When he was half through a prayer of great tenderness Quits suddenly got down on his knees and cried out, "O God save me! O God save me!"

Mr. Vernon went over and kneeled beside him putting an arm over his shoulder. Quits gradually grew quiet. After a silence he said, "Mr. Vernon, I believe."

Vernon thanked God. Then he took Quits by the hand. The tramp printer was really a new creature. As the days and weeks went by and Douglas hardly dared to believe in the wonderful event, Quits gave evidence of a sound conversion which even George regarded with awed astonishment. It was the repetition of the world-wide miracle, next to the resurrection the greatest miracle that the world will ever know. The saloon reached out its greedy fingers after Quits as before, but by the grace of God he had overcome. His whole soul was now stirred to save the men and boys who were in the hell from which he himself had just escaped.

All that is a story which Douglas himself must tell sometime. Meanwhile Quits proved a blessing to the Beacon which was making good friends and enemies with each successive edition.

With the opening up of school term in Colby came Esther Harris to begin her term with the high school and to delight Mr. and Mrs. Edwards with her glad, earnest, wholesome enthusiasm. What

more natural than that they should invite Douglas to come and take tea and meet his old college classmate? And what more natural than for that to happen which perhaps had already happened, as far as Douglas was concerned? At any rate as the fall months came on and the eventful election drew near, Douglas knew very well that Esther Harris was oftener in his thoughts than anyone or anything else. He tried to forget her in the work of the paper. It was a critical period with him. The dropping of the medicine ads., together with the loss of several other local merchants' displays that the Bartlett organ had captured had brought him face to face with a real crisis. It was becoming a serious question with him whether he could make the Beacon pay expenses. The party paper appealed to partisan prejudices of many years' standing. Many persons who had subscribed for the Beacon had not paid. And Douglas feared to push them for fear of losing them altogether. The election that was now so near contained issues that appealed to every instinct of righteous enthusiasm in him and his spirit rose many times a day to meet the opportunities those issues presented. And yet, in spite of all this which should have absorbed his life at this time, it is the truth that nothing could shut out the face of the new school ma'am of the Colby high school. Even George detected the change that had come over the editor and spoke of it to Quits.

"What's the matter with the old man? That last editorial had a piece of poetry in it that was as sweet as custard pie. But it looked to me as if he got it out of the wrong font. It had no more to do with the campaign than a panhandler has to do with a Sunday-school class. Say, Quits! Do you suppose Mr. Douglas is in love with the new school teacher? Isn't she pretty? She came in here the other day when you were out and brought some copy for a high school debating society program. Mr. Douglas was awful polite and particular about it. He read the proof on it fifteen times or I'm a barnstormer. He's boarding up at the Edwardses' now almost, ain't he?"

Quits smiled gravely and said little, but George kept his own counsel while he read the editorials in the Beacon with continued suspicion and admired the new school teacher at a distance and in his heart wanted to tell Douglas that in his opinion judging from the way the school teacher looked at the editor when she brought in the copy his chances were not so desperate as they might be. But being a somewhat wise boy in some directions he kept silence during the development of that beautiful romance which had invaded the dingy office of the Beacon and mingled the poesy of rhythm with the stern denunciations of the political reformer in the editorial columns.

When the election came it found Anderson county divided between its allegiance to old party principles and the independent movement championed by the Beacon and by most of the churches. An attempt had been made to run an independent candidate for county attorney but Douglas and the friends of reform had finally abandoned that, owing to the strong opposition and the campaign had narrowed to the one issue of saloon or no saloon. On this issue it seemed to Douglas, Edwards, Vernon, Quits, and others that all good citizens must unite, yet as the election went on, that November day there were very many signs of victory for the other side.

"It will be close, I think," Edwards ventured to predict. "But I don't dare hope we can beat the machine. It's too well organized. The mayor and his crowd have too much money. And it is the old story of party spirit degenerated into party slavery. Douglas has not had the Beacon long enough to make changes in political old timers or create a new constituency from the young crowd."

Vernon agreed with Edwards. All three men went to the polls that day with the feeling of depression they could not throw off. Douglas had printed several thousand leaflets on the issue of the election which he had distributed all over the town the day before. He had done his best and had no apologies to make for the Beacon, but like Mr. Vernon he could not avoid a feeling of despair.

When the returns began to come in the result was at first in doubt. But towards morning when the towns outside of Colby began to send in their returns, the three friends who had stayed up to get the news, came away from the office knowing that the people of Anderson county and Colby had deliberately voted to license the saloon for two years more. The machine and the saloons had joined hands and were victorious. Jake's Place was double lighted and the Wayside and all the other places were crowded with men and boys even at that early morning hour, carousing over the result.

"Come up to the house and get a lunch," said Edwards to Douglas and Vernon. "You come too," he added, speaking to Quits who had stayed up with the others. "Mrs. Edwards and Esther have planned to have something for us and you look specially fagged out," he spoke and looked at Douglas whose face was haggard and worn with the strain not only of that one night's vigil, but with the entire campaign.

So the men went up to the house and found the two women waiting sympathetically. Mrs. Edwards took Douglas' two hands in her own.

"You poor boy!" she exclaimed. "I know how terribly disappointed you must be! But don't get discouraged. You did your duty. The Beacon has been a success in every way. The people seem ungrateful but time will show different results. Don't you believe so Mr. Vernon?"

The minister waited a moment. "Yes," he answered slowly. "This is not the end; it's only the beginning! Two years from now if the Beacon isn't bankrupt and if my church and the others do not drive us out, I predict another result. I haven't lost hope. But I think every Christian in America ought to get on his knees to pray and on his feet to work that this government may go out of the saloon business, and I know God will not crown our labors with victory until the men in our churches have had a new Pentecost which shall baptize them

with the Holy Fire of consecration to the Kingdom of God, before allegiance to any party claims their first attention."

Douglas and Esther were talking quietly at the other end of the table. The lunch was all served and Esther and Mrs. Edwards had sat down with the others.

"Are you very much disappointed?" she asked. And Douglas was pleased at the deep marks of interested sympathy in her face.

"Very much so. How can I help that?"

"But you made a good fight."

"The other people made a better one."

"Do you think so? I should say theirs was a bad fight."

"They won out," said Douglas despondently. "Votes count."

"Are you going to give up?" she asked. And Douglas detected a feeling of disappointment in her tone.

"No, not as long as I can get money enough to print the Beacon! I'm going to stay here and fight as long as—as long as Mr. Edwards will furnish 'coffee and grub,' to quote George," answered Douglas with a flash.

"That sounds more like you as you used to be," said Esther smiling.

"Do you ever think of the old college times?" asked Douglas. Mr. Edwards was engaged in an animated discussion with the minister and being a very energetic talker it was necessary for him to thump the table quite often. Mrs. Edwards was at the other end of the table with Quits.

"Yes, indeed. I shall never forget baccalaureate Sunday." Esther's eyes twinkled.

"You were very good to help me out of that difficulty. I need some one to help me out quite often," Douglas said very awkwardly.

"You've got Quits and George," said Esther hurriedly. "They must be a great help to you on the paper, aren't they? I took a great liking to that boy when I was in the office the other day. Isn't he

funny? Is he always covered with ink that way? How does he manage it? But he is a loyal fellow. You ought to have heard him talk about you. He believes the Beacon is the biggest paper in the state. And he told me he would work on the Beacon for nothing just to help you. I call that a victory. As long as you've one friend like that you don't need to get discouraged. And then there's Quits. You've made a life-long friend of him. He told me that morning I came to get the programs that he owed you more than any other person. I call that fine. You ought not to get discouraged. The Beacon has made friends. It represents an idea. It's something worth while."

Douglas suddenly raised his eyes to hers. They glowed with a quick resolve.

"Do you care, Esther, whether the Beacon succeeds or fails?" he asked in a low tone. And although Mr. Edwards smote the table a blow that moment that jarred all the silver, Esther heard the question.

"Yes, I care," she answered.

"Do you care any more than George or Quits?"

"Yes, a good deal more," Esther replied hastily and Douglas did not think it was at all necessary for her to ask him at that moment, "Won't you have some more coffee?"

"Thank you, dear," Douglas said, under the cover of another gesture made by Edwards. "I have all I want," and Mrs. Edwards looked over at Esther at that moment and said to Quits, "Did you ever see a prettier girl than Esther? I declare she grows more beautiful every day."

A few days later Esther told Mr. and Mrs. Edwards that she had promised to marry the editor of the Beacon.

"The morning after the election when he came up to lunch I saw he was terribly disappointed. I had been learning to love him all through college. When I watched his fight with the saloon and all that I grew to care more and more. I saw he needed comfort just at what

he has told me since was a crisis with him. Do you think it was bold of me to let him know I cared for him just as I did?"

Mr. Edwards broke in.

"It's just what Mrs. Edwards did for me. I was getting discouraged over my looks. She hinted one day that mine and hers together would make more than a fair average, and I've been the happiest man you ever saw since."

"I'm rejoiced for you, dear," said Mrs. Edwards. "Mr. Douglas is a splendid fellow. We shall insist on your making your home with us for a while at least."

"We are not to be married until next spring," said Esther.

"Just like these pretty school teachers," growled Mr. Edwards who was one of the school board. "Just when you get one settled to teach, somebody else gets her. The board is going to pick out homely people after this. I suppose you'll go into the office and read proof"

"I shall help on the Beacon in some way," said Esther dreamily. "I believe in the Beacon."

A few weeks after the election Quits startled George one day by saying soberly,

"Mr. Douglas has got some one to take your place."

George almost dropped a form and pied it.

"What! Take my place! Not much! How can the Beacon run without me! It'll go to smash if I don't steer it right."

"I hear the school teacher is going to take your place," said Quits with his grave smile. "She's going to take both our places."

"Huh!" said George with a grin. "You most gave me palpertation of the brain. That's all right. When the ghost walks if I don't get her the finest bouquet in Colby. But we'll have to watch the editorials from now on. There'll be too much poetry in 'em. Mr. Douglas better turn the editorials over to you or me until he's married. I don't care, though, if the school teacher does come onto the staff of the Beacon. I like her."

"Who's that you like?" asked Douglas, who came in just in time to hear the last three words.

"The new associate editor of the Beacon, Mr. Douglas."

"Who? Who's that?" asked Douglas who had during the last few weeks lapsed into his old college habit of absent mindedness.

"He means the school ma'am," said Quits who was absolutely void of imagination.

"Oh," Douglas blushed, then laughed. "It will be some time yet. The Beacon will have to be more than self-supporting."

He spoke the words lightly yet when he went to his desk and sat down that morning to go over his mail he experienced almost a feeling of terror at the prospect that faced the Beacon.

Since the election subscriptions had fallen off. He could not account for some of the letters he had received. Most of them were depressing to him. The dropping of the questionable patent medicine ads. as fast as their contracts expired had reduced his regular income so seriously that even this morning he actually faced the disagreeable fact that unless he could get some money from some source he could not pay Quits and George at the end of the week.

As he sat at his desk he began to reproach himself with his yielding to the feelings which had forced him to ask Esther Harris to be his wife. What had he to offer her? He was penniless and might in a short time be bankrupt.

He began to open his mail. The first five letters contained requests from subscribers asking that the Beacon be discontinued. The next four were from merchants in Anderson county declining to renew the ads. they had been using in the paper. The remaining list of letters were for the most part abusive and complaining of some little mistakes made in mailing out papers to subscribers who had moved from one town to another without notifying him of the fact.

The editor of the Beacon had apparently reached a place in his career where something must be done. Never in all his life had he

felt so disheartened. At the other end of the office George was whistling as he rattled away at the old press putting it into shape for the afternoon's work. Quits was in his usual grave silent fashion standing at the case. And just then Douglas was startled at the entrance of Esther with Mrs. Edwards. It was half past eight and the office of the Beacon was on the way to the high school. As the two women came in, Douglas rose to greet them. He had never seen Esther looking more serious. He brought two chairs for his visitors and anxiously waited to know the reason for their call.

CHAPTER V.

"ESTHER has had bad news this morning," Mrs. Edwards said as Douglas gave his visitors a questioning look.

Douglas glanced at Esther.

"A telegram from Father says that Mother is very ill. I must start for home at once," Esther said.

"I'll go to the train with you," Douglas volunteered as he picked up his hat. Instantly his whole thought was diverted from his own troubles to Esther's.

"Mrs. Edwards is going home with me," Esther was saying as they went out of the Beacon office down to the little station where the morning train was due in half an hour. "You know Mother and she were classmates and friends in school years ago. It will be a great comfort to me to have her with me."

"I'm going to be all the help I can," Mrs. Edwards spoke in her usual cheerful, hopeful fashion.

"I wish I might do something." Douglas spoke rather doubtfully. Esther had always been so self-reliant, and buoyant in disposition that it was a new experience for Douglas to see her carrying the marks of anxiety in her bright face.

"I am hoping for the best," Esther said bravely.

Douglas saw to tickets and baggage and in the few minutes before train time walked up and down the platform with Esther.

"You will write or telegraph me in case—" he said as the train was drawing up to the station.

"Yes."

"I shall want to know as soon as possible."

"And you must write and tell me all about the Beacon. If Mother's illness is of long duration—I do not want to be selfish in the matter—" she turned her face to him and he kissed her goodbye and helped Mrs. Edwards aboard the train. As Esther followed she handed Douglas a letter saying, "Read it when you get back to the office. Goodbye. Don't work too hard."

"Goodbye, dear. God keep you!" Douglas replied.

He went back to the office and the minute he was seated at the well worn desk he opened the letter.

"Dear Frank:" (The letter had been written that morning after news of the illness of Esther's mother.) "A telegram has just come summoning me home on account of my mother's sudden illness. I do not know any more than the telegram says, but I have a misgiving that this is very serious, for Father warned me when I left home that something of the kind might happen. Whatever it is, I am going to hope for the best and believe in God through it all.

"I am going to ask a favor of you which I hope you will grant without any question or hesitation. I want you to take the enclosed check and apply it for me on the expenses of the Beacon." Douglas mechanically picked up the little slip of yellow paper which had fluttered out of the letter when he opened it and read the amount. It was $125. "I have saved this amount and a little more from my salary and I want to have a real share with you, Frank, in your life work. I am sure from what I know of the struggle you are having that you will soon need money to keep the Beacon going. I believe in you and in your purpose with all my heart, which is yours, and you should have no hesitation about letting me share now as I am going to always in the work of your life. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards do not know anything about this I am doing, but I do not have any doubts about it. If you send the money back, or feel reluctant to

use it, I shall take it as a sign that you do not love me. Remember, the Beacon represents something more than a little country paper in Anderson county, published by a struggling and ambitious young editor not yet a year out of college. The Beacon represents a Cause. The Cause of Right against Wrong. It is the only voice in the whole county aside from the pulpit that regularly and with influence speaks out against the saloon. I am not in any need of the money. Father is able to help me and I know he and Mother would both approve my course. So take it like a good boy and don't be so absent minded thinking about it that you throw it into the waste basket or pay it to George for his week's salary. Your life work is mine also. You trust me for that, don't you? I have the greatest faith in you. And I am very happy in the thought of sharing with you in every part of the struggle you are making.

"Your sweetheart,

"Esther."

The editor of the Beacon raised this remarkable missive to his lips and kissed the last three words of it. Then he said out loud, but softly,

"Esther Harris, if I don't make a success of the Beacon—" He did not say what would follow the "if" but as he raised his eyes George was standing by the desk.

"Say, Mr. Douglas, Quits wants some copy. There's nothing on the hook."

"All right. Here you are!" Douglas answered absentmindedly, picking up the check and handing it over to George.

George took it, looked at it, and whistled.

"Say! Mr. Douglas! Do you give a stem winding nickle plated hair brush with this, or a set of the World's Famous Orations bound in whole calf?"

"What! How's that!" the editor of the Beacon came back to

earth suddenly and snatched the check away from the grinning George.

"Tell Quits I'll have some copy for him in a few minutes," he said blushing furiously.

He seized a pencil and dashed into one of the strongest editorials he had ever written. George went over to Quits.

"The old man's got money to burn," he said confidentially to the quiet grave faced Quits. "I never approved of his shaking them Cemetery ads." (George always spoke thus of the patent medicine displays), "but if the associate editor of the Beacon is going to furnish butter for the bread like this we'll have pie to eat every meal after awhile."

When the editorial appeared George gave it his approval.

"It's all right," he said to Quits while that individual nodded a strong assent. "If I knew some nice girl I'd fall in love to improve my style. That's all I lack now.

The days went slowly by for Douglas while Esther was away. Mr. Edwards insisted on having him at the house most of the time during Mrs. Edwards' absence. Esther wrote brief letters each one anticipating her bereavement. Then one afternoon, Douglas received a telegram as he sat at his desk in the Beacon office.

"Mrs. Harris passed away this morning. Julia Edwards."

Mr. Edwards came in a few moments later with a similar telegram.

"I'm going down to Bergen to the funeral tomorrow. I want you to go with me. I am sure Esther will want to see you," Mr. Edwards said.

A note from Esther the next morning gave a few details relating to her loss and expressed a wish that Douglas and Mr. Edwards might both be present at the service. So they went on to Bergen and the whole experience through which Esther was passing and in which Douglas sympathetically shared deepened and enriched his affection

for her and their trust in each other. Her calm faith in the future and her unselfish attitude even in the midst of her loss gave Douglas clearer knowledge of her strength and made him feel more thoughtfully grateful for the gift of such a life to share his lot.

Esther remained with her father for a few weeks until a widowed sister came to keep house for him. Douglas returned the next day to his work and at once found himself confronting a new difficulty which Quits had hinted at but which Douglas had never seriously considered because he did not think it could be within the range of possibility. Almost the first words Quits spoke to Douglas the day after his return from the funeral were concerning paper for that week's edition.

"That order you sent into Clinton hasn't been filled yet, Mr. Douglas. If we don't get some paper this afternoon we can't go to press."

"Why! Do you mean to say we are out of paper?" Douglas asked incredulously.

"You can see for yourself, Mr. Douglas," Quits answered.

Douglas went over to the shelf where the paper was kept and saw at once that the supply was very low. He realized that he had recently been absorbed by the experience which Esther was having and he had been so certain that the order sent into Clinton would be met on time that he had not given the matter any more thought.

He came back to where Quits was standing.

"What's the matter with the Clinton people?"

"I wired over while you were at Bergen and they said they were having trouble to get their orders from the Eastern mills but they expected to get us some by the first of this week. If it doesn't come this afternoon it will be too late."

Douglas went right out and telegraphed to Clinton.

The firm in Clinton answered with regret that it was impossible for them to fill their order. There had been trouble in the

Eastern mills and it had been impossible for them to secure enough paper for their customers. They were very sorry, but they could not fulfill their contract, and did not know when the paper would be forthcoming.

Mr. Edwards was busy and Douglas did not trouble him with the matter, but at once went back to the office to consult with Quits. Under the inspiration of his new life in Christ Jesus Quits had developed with remarkable rapidity into a strong, healthful, earnest soul for whom Douglas thanked God every day of his life.

"What can we do?" Douglas asked while Quits gravely continued to set type just as if the office were filled to the ceiling with paper.

"Might try the Sentinel," Quits suggested.

Douglas was silent. He had thought of that himself on the way back from Mr. Edwards', but he naturally shrank from going to his rival to ask a favor. Quits seemed to understand his hesitation.

"I worked on the Register at Bergen once. And it was fighting the Index all the time and the two editors once came to blows on the street. But I remember two times when our press broke down the Index loaned us theirs as a favor. Of course we paid a good price, but they didn't refuse to let us have it. And we did the same for them once. It was simply a case of exchange and didn't mean any real friendliness. The editor of the Register called the editor of the Index a mugwump and several other names in the edition printed on the Index press, and so it was not a case of kiss and make up, but just simply newspaper courtesy."

George was listening.

"I'd sooner get out the Beacon on tin shingles than ask the Sentinel for anything," George remarked. "Only last week they called Mr. Douglas a college journalist. Any paper that uses the language the Sentinel uses ought to have a tin can tied to its tail and be turned loose in an alley."

"But we must have some paper if we go to press," Douglas said

seriously. Then after a moment he added, "I'll go over to the Sentinel and see if they will help us out."

George shrugged his small shoulders but did not say anything. Quits smiled in his serious fashion.

"We are commanded to love our enemies," he said not as if speaking to Douglas but as if talking to himself.

"Do you do that, Quits?"

"I find it difficult, Mr. Douglas, 'cause I'm my own worst enemy," Quits answered slowly.

Douglas went out with an air of decision as if he feared to argue the matter. The mayor's organ had from the start fought the Beacon with every newspaper weapon known to the profession. It had lampooned and caricatured the editor, had derided his ideals, flung ironical brands at his Sunday-school politics, and in every issue had used invective, sarcasm, and ridicule against Douglas. To all this personal attack Douglas had never once replied by so much as recognizing the existence of the Sentinel. This course on his part had enraged Bartlett tremendously. If Douglas had replied with taunt for taunt the mayor would have been delighted. To meet with absolute silence on the part of the Beacon was simply maddening to the Sentinel.

It can be easily understood therefore, that Douglas naturally hesitated when he thought of asking Bartlett for a favor even though he was prepared to pay for it a market price. When he entered the Sentinel office and inquired for the editor, Douglas nerved himself for a disagreeable interview.

The mayor was in, and as Douglas entered he looked up and said to Douglas' surprise, in a cordial tone, "Ah! Mr. Douglas! Take a seat. What can I do for you?"

Douglas was taken back. It struck him the mayor was too cordial. But in a few words he made known his errand.

"Of course I will pay spot cash for whatever paper you can spare.

I'm caught in rather an embarrassing position and shall be glad to return the favor if you are ever in a tight place."

He spoke in a business tone but he could not avoid the glance out of the mayor's eye that spoke a silent triumph.

The mayor closed his eyes a moment as if thinking. Then he went to the door and called out to Coleman who was at the case near by.

Coleman came into the office. He grinned at Douglas and carelessly returned his greeting.

"Coleman have we any extra supply of paper? Mr. Douglas here wants to borrow some for the Beacon."

I don't want to borrow, I want to buy," Douglas interrupted a little stiffly.

Coleman shook his head slowly. "We haven't any to spare. Our orders from Clinton are behind. We have just enough for the Sentinel this week."

"You hear that, Mr. Douglas," the mayor said gravely. "Sorry we can't accommodate you. It would hardly do for us to give you the Sentinel paper. We could hardly make subscribers understand our apology." The mayor spoke with a quiet satisfaction that made Douglas mad inwardly. Outwardly he simply said, "Out of the question. Good day, sir."

"Call again!" exclaimed the mayor with a smile.

Douglas did not answer. As he passed out he noted in the press room two linotype machines.

Coleman noted his glance at the machines.

"We've got 'em in," he volunteered to Douglas. "The Sentinel is getting a big country support. Our list is growing pretty fast. I suppose the Beacon is doing a land office business."

Douglas did not trust himself to reply. As he went out and crossed over the alley that ran across the street by the rear of the Sentinel office the sight of an express wagon in the alley backed up to the rear door of the press room seemed to start a suggestion that he acted on

when getting back to the Beacon office. The little room with its cheap furniture, its old press and its general air of old-fashioned equipment smote him with a sense of defeat which he bravely tried to beat off.

In a few words he related to Quits the result of his visit to the Sentinel office.

"There's something about the paper order from Clinton that I want to look into," he said to Quits who never stopped in his work. "I'll be back again soon."

He went out again; this time down to the railroad depot. The station agent nodded good naturedly at him as he walked into the baggage room.

"Nothing for me from Clinton yet, Mr. Rowell?"

"Expecting something?"

"I've been expecting some paper from Rice & Co."

Rowell shook his head. "Nothing for you. Might come up on the 9:50."

Douglas walked out of the room and the agent followed, throwing a box down on a truck and wheeling the truck up to the end of the platform. Douglas walked along by him; on the edge of the platform on the side facing the street were a number of packages marked for "The Sentinel, Colby."

"If anything comes from Clinton you will let me know at once, won't you, Mr. Rowell?"

"Yes, certainly," said Rowell, who, like all the working men in Colby had a great liking for Douglas. "I don't know why your paper doesn't come. The Sentinel has been getting their paper right along. There's one lot there. And they took up a load day before yesterday, too."

Douglas looked at the packages on the platform and did some hard thinking. It was evident that the mayor and Coleman had done some lying. It was also evident that in some way the firm in Clinton had good reason for violating their contract with the Beacon.

He went back to the office and told Quits what Rowell said. Quits listened gravely.

"Looks like a corner on paper, doesn't it, Mr. Douglas?"

"Looks like it. But do we go to press just the same, Quits?"

"We do if you say so, Mr. Douglas," replied Quits with cheerful faith in his employer's resources.

"Such a little matter as having no paper ought not to get in the way," said George who was cleaning the rollers. "It's getting out of ink that's serious."

"If we ever do we can get enough off of you by giving you a bath," said Quits soberly.

"That's all right," said George grinning. "Sooner than let that Coleman get the start of the Beacon I'd get out a special edition on meat market paper."

Douglas stared at the boy.

"Why not," he said to himself.

Quits looked doubtful but did not say anything nor stop in his work.

"Wait a minute. Let me think it out," Douglas said, as he went over to his desk. He sat there a few minutes and then got up suddenly, went out and up to Mr. Edwards' store.

In a few words he made clear the situation.

Mr. Edwards listened attentively.

"Do you know Rice & Co.?"

"No, not very well. They have always dealt promptly and honestly with me heretofore."

"But within the last month the mayor has become the heaviest shareholder in the firm. That may account for the fact that the Sentinel can get paper when there isn't any for the Beacon."

"Do you mean to say," asked Douglas in disgust, "that even Bartlett would descend to such a low trick in business?"

"I am afraid he would and he has. You don't know the mayor,

my son. He will stoop to anything short of crime to gain his end. You do not realize the fight he is making on you. He would like to crush you out of existence. He stands for the lowest, narrowest, most primitive type of political and commercial success. Such men do not work on any moral or ethical basis. They are living in the stone age of man, and their motto is, 'The strongest wins.' "

"Knowing these facts does not help me to paper," Douglas said with a faint smile. "I don't like to be always troubling you with my little woes, but I wondered if you had any considerable quantity of wrapping paper in the store that I might use. I don't like to be beat out of an edition altogether."

"Come out here and let's see what there is." Edwards took Douglas' arm and went out into the store with him. Inquiring from the head clerk disclosed the fact that there was a good stock of ordinary brown wrapping paper on hand.

"You're welcome to all of it," said Edwards, "if you need it. Until I can get more my customers can carry their things home in their pockets. It'll be a little embarrassing on 'em when they buy a dollar's worth of granulated sugar or a peck of beans; they'll have to do it all the same.

Douglas remonstrated but before he could say two sentences Mr. Edwards had Banks carrying the paper out and down to the Beacon office.

When it came in, Quits looked at it and shook his head, as he fingered the sheets critically.

"Don't believe we can make it go, Mr. Douglas. It's too coarse, and besides, it isn't wide enough for the forms.

"It will have to do." Douglas spoke doggedly. "There's nothing else. Dampen it a little and ink up well. We'll let our subscribers see something even if it's a curiosity."

"It's a curiosity all right," George muttered late that afternoon as that astonishing edition of the Beacon began to come off the press.

Quits had brought to bear on the problem all the technical skill he possessed after many years' experience in a printing office. But the paper happened to be an unusually poor quality even of wrapping paper. It was rough and of various degrees of weight. The type did not bite and even the editorial that Douglas wrote apologizing for the appearance of the Beacon was almost entirely illegible. To add to the general weird effect of the whole thing there was so little margin on some of the sheets that in spite of Quits' ingenious devices on the old press scores of papers showed only the fourth of a column in width on the outer edges of the page.

"We can't send this out, Quits!" Douglas said in despair as the press groaned; it seemed to him protesting against such a travesty on typographical labor. "It will be the laughing stock of all Anderson county."

Quits ran his grimy fingers through his disordered hair and smiled in his slow fashion.

George's spirits, however, had been rising with every turn of the handle.

"Mr. Douglas, don't you believe no such story. This edition of the Beacon will keep the people guessing. The whole thing's just like these puzzle pictures. Find the thought in the editorial. Find the end of the lines in the last column. See! The people will get no end of fun out of it. Don't let's let Coleman have the laugh on us. We'll show 'em we can get out something as long as the old press has a cog left in her."

Douglas laughed. "It will be something, that's sure. Well, it's the best we can do. But I expect to hear from it in various ways."

It would have astonished the editor of the Beacon if he could have foreseen that evening the number of ways he was destined to hear from the unique edition of the paper. There was nothing else talked about in Anderson county for a whole week. The story about Rice & Co., and the mayor leaked out in spite of the inability of Douglas'

subscribers to read his explanation. Mr. Edwards was not at all slow about spreading the facts as he knew them. Copies of that week's Beacon strayed as far as Clinton and some of the New York dailies managed to get a look at the paper and commented on the young Western editor's pluck.

To his astonishment requests began to come in for extra copies. People wanted them for souvenirs.

"When it comes to souvenirs, my boy," Mr. Edwards said, when Douglas related this event, "people are simply crazy. They will take anything from a strand of rope that hanged the biggest scoundrel in the universe to the tags on an opera singer's steamer trunk. But there is no question about the Beacon being a rare article. For a piece or for pieces of journalism, I think it can be truthfully said to be all by itself."

But Douglas had not yet begun to hear from the paper in the most important way for him. Three days after the "meat market edition," as George called it, had been sent out, Douglas was seated at his desk, relieved over the prospect of paper for that week's issue secured for him through Mr. Edwards' efforts with a firm in Bergen. The Bergen company happened to have a quantity of somewhat inferior paper in stock and was glad to dispose of it. It was not the regular newspaper stock, but after his experience with the wrapping paper almost anything seemed an improvement on that.

Douglas was busy going over his mail which had been largely increased by the effect of the Beacon's issue when he was interrupted by a man who came in abruptly and coming up close to his desk said without any preliminary remarks:

"Are you Mr. Douglas, the editor of the Beacon?"

"Yes."

"Can I have a few words with you?" the man asked.

"I'm very busy—" Douglas began, but his visitor simply said:

"I can state my errand without sitting down or taking off my hat.

My name is Sage—Cyrus Sage. I live on a farm about twelve miles north of Colby. I've been thinking and reading and praying over this whole cursed liquor business ever since I was big enough to have pockets to my clothes. I've taken the Beacon and read it since you came here. I've had every number and a part of a sentence in this last number sent me in here to have a little talk with you."

The man drew a copy of the "meat market edition" out of his pocket and began to read.

"The temperance cause needs—(word gone here) in county as well as city. The saloon—(blank) recruits from the boys—farms. (Can't read next line.) Investigation shows that more than half the boys who help to keep the saloon alive are from the country. This is enough to prove the necessity—(words gone here) instruction ought to be going on, agitation, education, facts show almost no effort being made in the county to train young—(rest of the editorial is wanting.)

"Did you write that?" the man asked as he folded up the paper and put it back into his pocket.

"I did. And I'm sorry you had to work your passage through it."

"That's all right, young man; I'm used to working. It is my habit. But now, not to take up your time—I want you to write a temperance story for me."

"What!" Douglas exclaimed, thinking the man must be crazy. And then he gave him more careful attention.

He might have been anywhere from forty-five to fifty years of age. He was dressed in very plain working clothes which had the stain of the soil on them. His boots were very rusty and his hat, which he had not removed, looked as if it had passed through a threshing machine and then been used as a target for the shot gun. The face under the hat was covered with a stubble of beard and was one of the most rugged, tanned, weather-beaten faces Douglas had ever seen. The eyes were clear, steady gray eyes that might look with equal indifference into the muzzle of a gun or a corn sheller.

"You want me to write a temperance story?" Douglas said, with a slight smile. "What for?"

"For me. Your editorial, what I could read of it, set me thinking. We've got seven union Sunday-schools in Payson township. They're chock full of children, and children are just the material to make prohibitionists. You know as well as I do that this state is going to have a great old tussle with the saloon one of these days and get away from the local option laws to state enactment. Now it struck me the farmers will have to do their share. I'm ready to do mine. I've got seven boys growing up, and the saloon will do its best to get my boys away from me. Their mother and me don't intend to let the saloon get 'em if we can help it. Of course the whiskey business cares no more than the devil for fathers and mothers and their boys. But my idea is this. Gather all these Sunday-schools together into one union gathering and have a temperance picnic. There's a grove on my ranch and they can meet there. My idea is to furnish two or three good speakers, have the schools work up temperance songs and offer prizes perhaps for temperance declamations or debates. But a temperance story to be read by a couple of pretty girls (and we've got loads of them in Payson township) seems to me would make a great hit. One chapter read in the forenoon say. Then have a good lunch and offer every Sunday-school scholar a dish of ice cream free and then the second chapter after lunch, with some more songs and temperance talks. How does that strike you?"

Douglas said to himself, "This farmer is not crazy at all. He's one of the sanest men I ever met." Out loud he said, "It's a capital idea, Mr. Sage. I'll be ready to help in any way I can."

"All right! Just give me a temperance story for the picnic. Then come out and hear it read."

"But I never wrote a story in my life. I don't—"

"Aren't you a college man?"

"Yes, but—"

"I thought a college man could write anything," said Mr. Sage, and Douglas looking at him could not tell whether he was in earnest or not.

"But a story is out of my line, Mr. Sage. I never wrote one in my life."

"Maybe you know someone who could write one here in Colby. I've heard the new high school teacher is a mighty smart girl. What's her name?"

"Miss Harris."

"Maybe you know her. Maybe she'd try her hand at a story. Would you ask her?"

"I might," replied Douglas smiling.

"Maybe, between you, you might work up a story. She could write the first chapter and you write the second. Then you would have a start, and—"

"I'll think it over," Douglas laughed. "But I tell you it's something I never did in all my life."

"I wish you would," Mr. Sage said wistfully. "There was Clara Lane's boy lived near us, the boy who was killed here just 'fore election. Why couldn't you use that incident in the story somewhere?"

"We might," Douglas stared at the farmer and a strange twinkling went over him as there flashed through his mind the dramatic possibilities of such a story.

"Well, Mr. Douglas, let me know if you decide to try the story, you and the school ma'am. Anyhow the temperance picnic's a go. I'll plan to have it in July. You are invited now. Come out and bring some nice girl with you. It's a pleasant drive. Maybe the school ma'am would come with you."

"Maybe she would," Douglas answered smiling.

Mr. Sage started out. "I'm much obliged for the time you've given me. Any free advertising you can give the picnic will be appreciated."

L. of C.

"I'll be glad to help in that way. And how about inviting some of the business men out. Do you know Mr. Edwards?"

"Guess I do. He and I were in the same army corps?"

"How would you like to have them come out with me?"

"First rate! Edwards wouldn't be bad for one of the speakers."

"Then there's Mr. Vernon of the First Methodist. Better get him too."

"We've heard of him. Thank you for these suggestions. I'll see him about it."

Farmer Sage went out and all the rest of the day Douglas brooded over the story idea.

In the evening he went up to the Edwardses' to talk the matter over with Esther who had come back to Colby the day before.

"But I never wrote a story either," Esther said when Douglas suggested the farmer's idea of a composite authorship.

"Nothing like trying," Mr. Edwards said. "Begin on it and if you get stuck just marry off the characters you don't know what to do with or else get them killed. I never wrote a story in my life but I believe I could get the people into plenty of trouble and then have some handy explosion or sickness close by to come at the last minute and remove all the embarrassing complications."

Douglas spoke of the Lane tragedy and told of the thrill he had been feeling all day at the thought of its possibility for dramatic treatment.

"I'm sure you could make a beginning with it, Esther," Mrs. Edwards said encouragingly. "And it would certainly be a novelty that would draw people to the picnic. Mr. Douglas is getting to be quite well known in the county and this plan of Mr. Sage's is certainly fine in every way."

Before the evening was over Esther had reluctantly consented to try writing the first chapter of the Temperance Story and Douglas

agreed to continue it. They all talked over the farmer's idea and the longer they discussed it, the greater its possibilities seemed.

"Of course you and Mrs. Edwards will plan to drive out to the picnic when it comes off," Douglas said as he was leaving.

"All right!" said Edwards winking at Mrs. Edwards. "You and Esther can speak for the back seat now."

"I hope we won't have to take any back seat when it comes to this story," Douglas answered while Esther blushed and looked prettier than ever.

"I believe I can write something," she said with a great deal of spirit.

"You'll have to look out for your laurels, young man," said Edwards. "I believe in chapter one all right, but I have my honest doubts about the second."

"We'll see," was all that Douglas ventured to reply, but as he went out he grew every moment more and more roused over the idea and found himself during the next few weeks almost impatient for Esther to finish her part so that he might begin on his own.

Two weeks after the incident of Mr. Sage's visit, George came in one evening after supper and exclaimed as he pulled off his coat and started in to fix the press for some special job work,

"Heard the news about the Sentinel?"

Quits was making up forms, and Douglas was helping him. Both looked up but neither spoke.

"They're having the time of their lives at the Sentinel with their linotype machines. Yesterday one of 'em went broke and there ain't nobody in the office knows how to fix it, and to-day the other one fell down, and the whole force is monkeyin' round it with cold chisels and wrenches and swear words and the ink on the rollers is blue instead of black on account of the atmosphere."

"They've got the Hattersley machines, Mr. Douglas," Quits said in answer to a questioning look. "He got the machine out in '74 and

it's not bad when everything is all right, but when they get to acting up the inventor himself don't know sometimes what ails it. I know because I worked in the factory where they were made for two years. But Bartlett made a great mistake when he got them for a country paper."

"He'll know how we felt two weeks ago," George chuckled. "He's long on paper, may be, but he's mighty short on type. Wouldn't I like to ask Coleman how he feels tonight? It's dead sure he can't get the Sentinel out. The nearest expert is in New York."

Douglas went over to his desk. He was saying to himself with a sort of fierce exultation, "I'm glad of it! I hope Bartlett will be at the greatest possible expense and have no end of trouble. I hate him!"

He started in to write something but his thought did not come freely. He dropped his pencil and stared at the little calendar pinned on the back of the desk. Then he tried to write again. But the only words he could think were the words, "I hate!"

He sat staring at the calendar for another interval. Then he got up and went over to where Quits was working.

"Did you say, Quits, that you understood the mechanism of the Hattersley type setters?"

"Yes, Mr. Douglas, I understand them all right. I have helped to make them."

Douglas looked gravely at Quits before he put the next question.

CHAPTER VI.

WOULD you be willing, Quits, to go to the Sentinel office and—" Douglas paused as Quits stopped working and looked curiously at him. George was listening, an incredulous stare on his inky countenance which at any other time would have made Douglas laugh.

"And show them what is the matter—to—to—put the machines into working order?"

"I'm perfectly willing, Mr. Douglas," Quits replied and there was a light on his homely face that quite transfigured it.

"I don't feel just right—" Douglas began, then stopped, wondering if Quits understood.

"I see," said Quits, and reached up after his coat and hat. "You don't want to come down to the mayor's level by hating him the way he hates you."

"That's a part of it. How did you know?" Douglas asked, startled at Quits' knowledge of the case.

"I've been there," Quits said briefly.

"My mother taught me," Douglas said, as Quits put on his coat, "that it never did any good to hate anybody, and I've been hating the mayor good and hard for some time. I can't do my work right if I keep this up. I've got to learn to love him. This seems like a good chance to heap coals of fire on his head."

"I'd sooner fire a pailful of slugs at him," muttered George the edge of whose conscience was not quite sharpened up to the extent of loving the mayor or Coleman.

"Shall I say any thing to the mayor, Mr. Douglas, for you?" Quits paused in the door a moment.

"Simply tell him that I have asked you to help put the machines in order and that he is welcome to your services this evening."

Quits went out and Douglas began to write. He had never felt more at peace with God and men. He did not realize it himself, but in that dingy little room in that little county town had been fought out a tremendous battle against the world-old barbarism of hate, and the spirit of the Peasant of Galilee had come off conqueror. The savage primitive man who still is found in all our breasts had been compelled to get down off the throne for another time and in his place sat a figure wearing the crown of thorns, with the love look of the cross in his patient eyes. When George came up to the desk a few minutes after Quits had gone out, and asked Douglas for something, the boy was not so dull that even he could not detect the presence of the transforming life, and he silently went back to his work leaving Douglas to continue his writing unmolested by any criticism or remark.

When Quits entered the Sentinel office he found the entire office force, including the mayor, anxiously gathered about the machines. Coleman was on his knees, a scowl on his sallow face, and a litter of bolts, nuts, and screws on the floor beside him. The rest of the office force stood around trying to assist Mr. Coleman with more or less silent and outspoken profanity.

Quits went up to the edge of the circle, and for a moment his entrance was not noticed on account of the absorbed interest every one was taking in Coleman's efforts to find the difficulty. Just as Quits came into the circle Coleman got up off his knees and threw down a wrench with an oath.

"The old machine can go to Jericho for all of me! I can't fix it."

He looked around the circle of anxious faces and caught Quits'

grave, homely countenance among them. Quits nodded and in the silence that followed Coleman's outburst he said slowly,

"Mr. Bartlett, I think I can fix the machines all right. Mr. Douglas sent me over to offer my services."

"What! Mr. Douglas sent you over here!"

"He'll fix the machines all right if you give him a show at them!" Coleman said savagely.

Bartlett stepped up to Quits.

"What do you know about the Hattersley?" he asked sharply.

"I've helped to make them in the factory," Quits replied quickly.

"Don't let him touch them, Mr. Bartlett. He'll ruin them," Coleman said with a snarl.

"I couldn't ruin them for use any more than they are now if I tried," said Quits simply. "If you are willing to give me a chance, Mr. Bartlett, I believe I can straighten them out. Mr. Douglas heard of your difficulty and sent me over here to help you. That's all there is to it. He said I might stay all the evening if it was necessary. But I don't think it will be."

There was an expressive silence in the Sentinel press room. It was broken by the mayor saying sullenly, "I don't care who puts the machines in order. If you can do it, I'll pay you a good stiff price. There are advertising contracts beginning with this week's issue that I can't afford—"

But Quits was already on his knees looking over the assortment of metal pieces which Coleman had distributed over the floor.

"The trouble is with the bell cranks," he said after a keen investigation. "You can't depress the pistons with the bell cranks in that position."

He rapidly replaced the parts that had been separated from the machine and after some two hours experimenting the machine was working perfectly. Leaving the operator at work on it Quits went over to the other machine and found that the propeller which drew

the rows of type forward to the pistons worked by the bell cranks had been thrown out of gear by imperfect bands of rubber. The difficulty was more serious than in the case of the other machine, but he finally mastered it, and when he rose to go at midnight the machine was in perfect working order.

Quits was going out in his silent fashion when the mayor abruptly drew him into his office.

"Here's your pay," he said roughly, handing out to Quits a fifty dollar bill.

Quits shook his head and did not take the money. "I am not authorized to take anything, Mr. Bartlett. You are welcome to my services."

"I don't want your services without paying for them."

"I shall not take your money. It's Mr. Douglas' affair. I am working for him."

"I'll send the money to him, then. I don't care to be under any obligation to him," said the mayor with a scowl.

Quits smiled gravely. "I don't think he'll take the money either, Mr. Bartlett. Do you know why Mr. Douglas sent me over here to-night?"

The mayor was silent a moment. But his curiosity finally got the better of his sullen feeling.

"No, I don't. Why did he?"

"He was afraid of getting to hate you if he kept on," replied Quits with perfect simplicity.

The mayor stared at Quits, but did not utter a word and in the silence following his remark Quits went out.

He found Douglas and George still at the Beacon office and in his brief fashion related the experience of the evening.

"I knew you didn't want me to take the money, Mr. Douglas."

"And yet," muttered George, "we need an office towel the worst kind. I'd like to see anybody offer me fifty dollars and expect me to

make 'em a Christmas present of it. But I bet that old Coleman's punching himself to think he hadn't got sense enough to adjust a bell crank on a Hattersley. Did he give you a free ticket to the opera when you got through?"

"No, he didn't," said Quits gravely. "What do I want of a ticket to the opera? I never go."

"You did all right about the money," Douglas said. "Well it's a good evening's work. If Rice & Co. would send us some paper now, we wouldn't refuse that. But it's too much to expect." He sighed as he went to his desk, facing again the discouragement of a falling subscription list, the failure of Rice & Co. to make good their contract and the knowledge that Esther's generous sharing with him was apparently only a brief respite from ultimate suspension of the paper.

In spite of all forebodings, however, he slept well that night and thanked God when he awoke that so far as he knew he hated no man in the wide world.

That forenoon a messenger brought him a brief note from the Sentinel office enclosing a check for fifty dollars for service rendered. Douglas asked the messenger to wait, and returned the check with a brief word of acknowledgment for the courtesy, but declining to accept pay for service that had simply been offered in a spirit of friendliness.

This note had no reply but late that afternoon Douglas received a telegram from Clinton:

"Paper on hand. Will ship at once.

"Rice & Co."

He took the telegram over to Quits.

"The mayor is getting even," was all he said.

"No man is all bad all over all the time," Douglas said thoughtfully.

"We are apt to think other men are a little worse than we are," Quits said. Of course we don't expect the Sentinel to change its poli-

tics or fight the Beacon any less after this, but I guess the mayor's got a streak of fat in him along with the lean."

"Like most hogs," said George.

"I didn't say that," Quits protested.

"I know you didn't, I said it for you. If I didn't say things for you and Mr. Douglas, lots of things that need to be said would never be said."

Quits pondered on this while Douglas ran out to tell Mr. Edwards the news about the paper.

He found Mr. Vernon there earnestly talking with Mr. Edwards.

"The crisis is bound to come," the minister was saying. "The politicians can't stop it. It will not be ten years before the legislature will have to submit the question to the people. The fight is centering more and more for representatives on the issue. The sentiment is growing, and the mayor and all his tribe cannot stop it."

Douglas forgot about his own matters in the spirited talk that followed, for Mr. Edwards was simply a crank, as he himself said, when it came to temperance and he would pound on the counter with the scale weights to emphasize his assertions. And Douglas remembers seeing him once, in the enthusiasm of a remark, pick up a dozen eggs in a paper bag that a clerk had carelessly left within reach of Edwards' gesticulating arms, and throw the entire bag full on the counter spattering his astonished hearers with a liberally raw omelet and convincing them of his earnestness if not winning them over to his views with his arguments.

"Don't forget about Sage's Temperance Picnic, Mr. Vernon," Douglas called out as the minister was leaving.

"No, indeed; that's a capital idea. That will create sentiment among the coming voters and legislators."

"Heard about that temperance story Miss Harris and Douglas are going to write?" Edwards asked. "It's my opinion, though, that if

they get their heads together there'll be precious little progress on any story except their own."

"I am looking forward to that, Douglas"—the minister smiled. "Mr. Sage mentioned it as a possibility. Success to you both."

"Thank you," Douglas laughed. "Mr. Edwards hasn't much faith in my part of it. To tell the truth, I haven't much for myself; but I'm going to try."

When spring arrived Esther had completed her chapter and one evening she read it to Douglas and Mr. and Mrs. Edwards. The next evening Douglas took the chapter down to the Beacon office and when Quits and George had gone out he shut the door, locked it, and read the chapter through.

During the winter months that preceded this time, the Beacon had struggled along with a variety of experiences. There had been times when, if it had not been for Esther's cheerful faith and buoyant temper, Douglas might have been tempted to give up the fight. Many of his trials he never told her or any one, but fought them out alone. Some of them Esther and Edwards guessed, and their combined encouragement meant everything to the young editor. Esther insisted on helping again with a little money which Douglas accepted on condition that when they were married he would repay with interest. Mr. Edwards also once made Douglas accept an unusually large advertisement and paid for it in advance at a time when the treasury was so low in the Beacon office that Douglas did not know where another dollar could possibly be found to keep up running expenses.

Then to his surprise Mr. Vernon had helped increase his subscription list by interesting his church young people in the paper and forming a club that worked in connection with a combination magazine offer. This was practical help that brought in some ready cash, and, what was better still, added to the regular constituency of the paper.

After some fashion, therefore, the paper was still being printed

and so far Douglas had avoided what had been his college terror a debt. George grumbled at that old press which he said was nothing but a pile of old scrap iron held together with gum, but neither he nor Quits had lost their faith in the final success of the Beacon or its ability to scoop the Sentinel on news, advertisements, or editorials.

Douglas, sitting down with the chapter Esther had written, read it over carefully, making a few notes as he read. Then he got up and walked up and down a few minutes. He came back to the desk picked up a pen and began to write.

It was his first experience at story writing and he was surprised to find how easy it was for him after once beginning. He wrote on until after midnight. When he read it over out loud he grew a little doubtful but attributed it to the reaction following his excitement over his first literary adventure.

The next evening he wrote a little more and for the next few weeks he made slow progress on the chapter, and it was the last week in May before he finished the story and took the completed chapter to Mr. Edwards' to read it over to Esther. After getting to the house however he suggested that they wait until the picnic came off before he read his part.

"Oh, we can't wait until then!" Mr. Edwards exclaimed. "That isn't fair! We've heard Esther's chapter and have agreed that it's all right. But we don't know anything about yours. How do we know what you are going to give us?"

"You don't, and the more I think it over, the more I believe I'll not read my chapter to any one until the day of the picnic."

"I'm satisfied with that," Esther said. She had the least curiosity, Mr. Edwards said, of any woman he ever knew.

"Oh, if you're satisfied, that ends it with Douglas, of course," Mr. Edwards growled. "My feelings or those of Mrs. Edwards are not to be considered."

"I'll read it if you say so," Douglas turned laughing to Mrs. Edwards.

"No, I am willing to wait. It will make it more interesting to us if we don't know it all beforehand."

Mr. Sage came into the office two weeks later.

"I've fixed the date, July 14. I'm expecting a big crowd. They're all talking about it. I've come in today to get some lumber. I'm going to build a platform for the speakers and have seats all through the grove. How about that story?"

Douglas told him it was all finished and was the best they could do.

"Good! What's your idea about the reading of it?"

"Oh, I don't know. What's yours? You suggested before that two pretty girls read it, each taking a chapter."

"Well, what's the matter with the school ma'am reading her own chapter? Isn't she as pretty as any girl in Payson township?"

"I think she is," replied Douglas promptly.

"And what's the reason you can't read your own chapter after the lunch? You can spell out your own writing better than any body else. And, besides, the people will take to that. They'd rather hear the authors of the story read their own production."

Douglas consented to this for Esther and himself and Mr. Sage went out highly pleased over the prospect of a very drawing card for the first temperance picnic in Payson township.

As the date drew near Douglas made his plans to close up the office and invited Quits and George to go with the party.

"You've not had any vacation for some time. We'll close up every thing and go out there and have a good time."

"Does Mr. Sage give anybody but them Sunday-school kids a dish of ice cream, Mr. Douglas?"

"We'll manage to get a dish for you, George. I'll give you mine. And Quits never eats ice cream. There are two dishes for you."

"I'd just as soon have pie." George smiled and with great satis-

faction covered up the old press and scrubbed up with what looked like a cake of tar and a piece of brick.

Mr. Edwards had hired a double team and a three seated wagon so Quits and George went along with the party. Mr. Vernon and his wife drove over in their buggy, and there were two loads of local politicians who went along thinking the new picnic might be a fine opportunity to practice on mixing with the people.

It was a most enjoyable day for a drive and everybody in the three seated rig seemed to be in the best of spirits. Mr. Edwards drove and Mrs. Edwards insisted on sitting with the driver. Quits and George occupied the middle seat, and Esther and Douglas promised to behave like good children on the third.

About half way on the road Mr. Edwards reached under his seat and pulled out a basket. He lifted it over to Quits and George, winking at the company and saying,

"I always get fearfully hungry at a picnic, so I brought along a little extra lunch just to keep us from fainting away. Sometimes at a picnic, I've noticed the boys don't get their share."

He winked at George to open the basket. He did so, and disclosed to view six fresh baked apple pies.

"Why, James Edwards!" exclaimed his wife. "Those are the pies I baked for the ladies' aid supper which comes off tomorrow night."

"I'm real sorry!" Mr. Edwards pretended to show great regret. "They were not labeled, and you did not tell me about it. Don't cry, Julia, that's a good little girl. I'll bake some more in the morning."

"Did you ever see such a man!" Mrs. Edwards laughed until she cried, while even the serious Quits could not hold out against the example she set them. It is also recorded that one boy at least among all those who attended that famous first picnic in Sage's grove had all the pie he wanted that day.

Sage's grove was a sight to be remembered. Long before ten o'clock there were hundreds of teams on the ground and the seats

in front of the speakers' stand were filling up rapidly. There were hundreds of boys and girls and the young women for the most part were dressed in white, and with touches of ribbon on hat and waist gave agreeable and lively color to the cool green of the grove. Hay racks brought in large loads of Sunday-school classes, laughing and singing. The farmers unhitched their horses, tied them to the trees, and stood about in rapidly increasing groups, waiting for the program of the morning to begin. The women busied themselves finding convenient places for the spreading of the lunch and large baskets and bundles were taken out of the wagons and deposited near the patches of table cloth that checked the ground.

On the sides close to the seats half a dozen pedlars, with Mr. Sage's permission, had pitched booths for the sale of lemonade, peanuts, ice cream, candy, and popcorn.

Mr. Sage was all over the grounds at once, apparently, and the party from Colby had not been in the grove five minutes before he found them and gave them a hearty greeting.

"It's a success already, Sage," said Edwards as he unharnessed the horses and with the help of the others arranged the wagon cushions around the place selected for the lunch.

"I think it is," Mr. Sage replied. "There must be as many as four thousand people here already. That's more than you get out to church, Mr. Vernon," he spoke to the minister who just then came up.

"It's a fine opportunity, Mr. Sage. But do you think they'll gather on the seats and remain during your program?"

"Will they? Wait until the singing begins. I must start the thing off now in a few minutes. You understand about the program? I sent you one. Singing and recitations from ten to eleven. Then Mr. Edwards gives a fifteen minutes' talk. Then Miss Harris reads her chapter. After that lunch. At two o'clock some more singing, and recitations. At three Mr. Douglas reads his chapter. Then

Mr. Vernon makes his talk and we finish with America. Next year I'm going to have an evening session, but we're not ready for that this time. Go right up on the platform. I've reserved seats for all the performers up there."

Mr. Sage was off to get the singers rounded up and the Colby visitors went up on the platform and took the seats reserved for them close by the Sunday-school chorus.

"As one of the performers, do you feel nervous, Esther," asked Douglas as they sat down and looked with great interest at the crowd streaming towards the seats.

"No, I don't know that I do;" Esther laughed a little. "I am a little doubtful, though about making the people hear. I have never talked out doors and doesn't it seem a little absurd to you to shout out a story to an audience?"

"Don't try too hard. Just speak slowly and clearly. Talk straight ahead and don't turn from one side to the other. You have a beautiful voice. I don't have any trouble in hearing it."

"Don't you?" Esther smiled. She had never appeared to better advantage and Douglas felt proud of her as he sat there beside her more tempted to glance at her wide awake, resolute, earnest face than to watch the great crowd that began to pack all the rising bank of seats in front of him.

And it was an inspiring scene to the dullest person there.

As the first Sunday-school chorus rose to sing, the audience applauded vigorously. The children's sweet voices rung out with glad abandon. And when they finished there was a loud call for another. Mr. Sage made a little speech saying it was going to be the rule to have no encores on account of the number of performances on the program. So with admirable precision the singing and recitations went forward and the rival Sunday-schools cheered their own members in turn. When at the close of that part of the program, Mr. Edwards came forward to

make his little talk, everybody was stirred up to a pitch of earnest enthusiasm.

Douglas and Mr. Vernon were surprised at Mr. Edwards' talk. He surpassed himself and, as Mr. Sage remarked, "put up a mighty good article." The only thing that seemed to embarrass him was the absence of anything to pound. There was a small table on the platform with a pitcher of ice water on it; but Mrs. Edwards, who knew her husband's habits, very thoughtfully whispered to Mr. Sage to put the pitcher on the floor just as Mr. Edwards began to gesticulate, so the only thing that happened to punctuate one of his periods was the knocking of the tumbler into the audience, where two deaf old farmers successfully dodged it as it whizzed past them. Mr. Edwards sat down mopping his perspiring head and Mr. Sage rose to introduce the first reader of the temperance story. "Miss Esther Harris of Colby High School, who will read the first chapter of a story entitled,

'HIS MOTHER'S PRAYERS.'"

Esther went forward slowly and the immense crowd became so still that Douglas remembered afterward that two birds were singing on the other side of the creek and their notes rose clear and distinct as Esther began.

At first he was afraid she was not going to be heard. Some persons on the bank farthest away began to move down nearer the front. But in a few moments Esther was evidently reaching the farthest listener with her strong, clear, distinct enunciation. Mr. Edwards leaned forward with a satisfied smile. Douglas felt pleased and proud. Mr. Sage sat with his mouth open in delight, and the chorus stopped fidgeting and turned their faces towards the reader.

* * * * * * * * *

"I'm sick of the old farm and everything about it," said Andrew Miner, as he came into the little kitchen of the farm house one evening and set a pail of milk down on the table.

His mother, who was washing dishes at the kitchen sink, turned a pale, worn, anxious face towards the boy.

"What's gone wrong now?"

"Everything. We don't have anything fit to do with. It's just slave all day to make a living and we're no better off than when Father died. I don't see the use. I want to quit it, Mother, and go to town. Let's sell this old farm and go to town to live."

"And who'd buy the old farm and pay anything for it if we put it up for sale?" asked an older boy, coming in at that moment and putting another pail of milk down on the table. "The Cranes have had their farm on the market two years now and no buyers. If we put it up to auction we couldn't get a song for it. Talk a little sense."

"Talk a little yourself," exclaimed Andrew passionately. "It's what you always say whenever I suggest doing something to better ourselves. You may be willing to slave all your life for a lot of good-for-nothing cattle and hogs; but I don't intend—"

"Oh, get out! You're always talking about slaving; but I notice you always let me lift the heaviest end. You didn't do your share of the milking tonight."

"I did, too! You're always—

"Boys! Boys!" Mrs. Miner spoke with great agitation. "It's dreadful for you to quarrel so. You will kill me if you don't stop it!" She sat down suddenly and put her thin fingers over her face. The tears trickled through upon her hands and the boys were silent. After a moment the older one emptied his milk into a couple of pans, picked up his pail, and went out.

Andrew stood irresolutely by the table.

"I'm sorry, Mother." He went over by her side and spoke as if he was ashamed a little. "Rod nags me all day. He complains if I stop at the end of a furrow to take breath. He's always at me for one thing or another. And I hate the whole business. Mother, I could earn something in town, and you could get a girl to help in the work.

Jim Walker went to Colby last winter and he's in a hardware store there getting thirty-five a month, and he hasn't had any more training for it than I have. He says he thinks he can get me a place in Mansfield's grocery at twenty-five to start with, and I'd sooner work a year at that, than keep on pegging away at this old farm where we never get ahead any."

Mrs. Miner was drying her tears on her apron.

"But, Andy, you're my baby. What could you do alone in the town? You ain't big enough."

"Why, Mother! I'm no baby any longer; I'm eighteen, and I weigh a hundred and forty-five, and I know as much as Jim Walker any day. I can't stand it on the farm any longer. We never have any fun and we're nothing but clodhoppers anyhow."

He flung himself down moodily in a kitchen chair, and his mother got up and resumed her dishwashing. Andrew was not looking, or he would have seen a tear fall from his mother's eyes into the dishwater. Her thin hands trembled as she took the dishes out and began wiping them. She was trembling so violently that one of the heavy plates slipped from her grasp, fell with a crash upon the floor, and broke into half a dozen pieces.

Andrew jumped to his feet and exclaimed, "Why, Mother, what's the matter? Are you sick? Here! You sit down and let me finish the dishes. You are not well."

The boy insisted on her going into the other room and lying down on a couch there, while he finished the dishes. While he was at work the older boy, Rod, came in with another pail of milk.

"Where's Mother?" he asked briefly.

"In the sitting room."

Rod strained the milk and then went in where his mother was.

Andrew could hear them talking; at first in low tones so that he could not catch the words. At last he heard his brother say,

"Oh, well, Mother, if Andrew has got his mind fixed on going to

town, might as well let him go. He's been of no use on the farm for more than a year. He takes no interest in the work, and I can get along about as well without him around."

Andrew could not hear the mother's reply; but from the tone of Rod's next remark he inferred that she had given a feeble consent.

"He won't need much of an outfit to start on. If he gets the position at Mansfield's it will just about keep him in board, lodging, and clothes; but won't leave him any margin for foolishness."

Andrew finished the dishes and scalded out the milk pail, and when he came into the room where his mother was Rod had gone up stairs.

"Rod thinks you might as well go, if you want to, Andy," she said feebly. "But it doesn't seem to me as if I could spare you."

For the first time the boy seemed to have a little remorse.

"I'll stay, Mother! I won't go."

"No, you won't be easy till you've gone to live there. I wouldn't care if it wa'n't for the temptations."

"But there are plenty of temptations in the country, Mother, just as much as in the city." The boy spoke irritably, and his mother shrank back a little. "I ought to be able to stand up like a man."

"But you're not a man yet, Andy," his mother said, with a faint smile.

"I will be pretty soon," he muttered, as he walked irresolutely up and down.

They talked together for an hour, and at the end of that time Mrs. Miner seemed reconciled to the plan of Andrew's leaving the farm for Colby. Andrew noted her weariness, and suddenly exclaimed,

"You're tired out, Mother! You must go to bed. Call me if you are ill in the night, won't you?"

"Yes, Andy; good night."

"Good night, Mother."

Andrew went up and put his arms around her shoulder and kissed

her. It was evidently an unusual act, for she caught his arms and drew him nearer.

He seemed ashamed and drew back.

"Good night, Mother," he said again.

"Good night, Andy," she replied, and went at once into her room.

Andy's room was down stairs next to his mother's. He went into it and at once went to bed and to sleep.

When he awoke he thought at first that it was morning; but after a moment he heard the old clock striking eleven. It was a most unusual hour for him to be awake, and he felt nervous and irritable. Then, as he lay there after the clock had ceased striking, he heard a voice in the next room. The partition was very thin, and he could not help hearing the voice and the words:

"O Lord"—the voice rose in a tone that made Andrew wonder, because it did not sound like his mother's voice at all—"O Lord! be merciful to me. The boy! I don't want him to leave me! It's lonesome out here on this prairie which you have made to lie under the stars so silent and lost. Three of my pretty ones gone!" (Andrew's mind as he lay listening traveled out to the little cottonwood grove west of the house, where he had helped his mother and Rod dig three little graves for two brothers and a sister, all victims in one day of diphtheria before a doctor could reach them from Colby.) "And then Jason, and now my baby. I cannot bear it! O, give me a vision of comfort! I need it so! Have I been wicked beyond measure, O Lord, that I am punished more than others? Janet and Elizabeth were such pretty children! How sweet they looked in their coffins! They smiled at us. But why, O Lord, did you pick them out of our garden, when there are so many other gardens to pick from? Did you need them more than I did, you who have all the world for your own? Could you not spare me my treasures? Oh, I am desolate! And now my boy! He does not love me. O God! When I drew him towards me tonight he shrank away! And I nursed him through peril

and in midnight weariness. I pillowed his baby head on my bosom for fear you would take him from me. O Lord! are not my burdens heavy to bear? Is not my cross almost equal to yours? For you had the infinite, divine nature to support you while I am only weak, trembling, human! What am I saying? Forgive me, Son of God, I did not mean to blaspheme. But my soul is in the dark. Will you not take care of my boy when he leaves me? You have three of mine to play with. Will you not send an angel to guard my boy from evil? Surely you can spare one angel out of all the hosts of them that do what you tell them to. O God, spare my boy! O God, don't let him perish! O God, make him love me! O God, don't let him die as his father did! O God—"

Andrew could not endure any more. Every word stabbed him. He felt vaguely that his mother's reason was being shaken. A terror for the future took hold of him as he sprang out of bed and went into the sitting room and knocked trembling on his mother's door.

The voice ceased at once, but Andrew heard sobs.

"Mother! Mother! are you ill? Can I do anything for you?"

There was silence a moment; then Mrs. Miner answered in her natural tone, "No, Andy. Was I talking in my sleep? I am sorry if I woke you."

"Can I do anything for you, Mother?"

"No, dear boy. I will go to sleep. I am not in need of anything."

Andrew hesitated. His soul was still agitated by what he had heard. In the darkness he felt his heart beating heavily.

"You don't doubt my love for you, do you, Mother?" His voice trembled.

"No, Andy, I never doubted it," the reply came quickly. "Come and kiss me, and I will go to sleep, and not disturb you any more."

Andrew went in and kneeled down by the bed and kissed his

mother tenderly. Then as he stroked her thin cheek with his fingers he said,

"Don't worry about me, Mother. I'll go to Colby and become a rich merchant, and take you away from this lonesome place, and make you a beautiful home, and you won't have to slave any more."

"I believe you will, Andy. I believe you will. Your old mother is not good for much. But you will not forget her, will you, Andy?"

"Why, of course not, Mother!" Andy said, as he rose and went back into his own room. "Good night, and pleasant dreams, Mother."

"Good night, Andy."

Next morning Mrs. Miner did not show any signs of unusual mental disturbance, to Andrew's great relief. He did not say a word about the night's experience, and did not tell her what he had heard.

In two weeks the boy had secured the clerkship in the grocery store at Colby, and one morning Rod drove him over. There were tears in Andrew's eyes as he kissed his mother good-bye.

"Don't cry, Mother. I'll send for you before long. Rod can get married and run the farm, if he wants to, and you and I will live in town."

Mrs. Miner waited till Rod had gone out with a bundle to put in the wagon. Then she flung her arms about Andrew's neck and kissed him passionately.

"I'll pray for you, Andy, every day and every night."

"Don't, Mother! Don't!" Andrew said, stammeringly. "Don't."

"What! Not pray! But I must. I shall!"

"Well, well, Mother; I meant, don't worry. I'll be good to you. I won't forget."

His mother stood watching the wagon until it disappeared over a knoll, and then went back into the house. After the morning work she went out to the little cottonwood grove where the three small graves and one large one were, and when Rod came back late in the

afternoon he could not find his mother anywhere. When he called her, she answered him. He went out to the groves and found her sitting there talking to herself. Without saying anything, he took her hand and led her, unresisting, back into the house.

The first months of Andrew's stay in Colby he wrote regularly twice a week to his mother. Then the letters dropped off to once a week. In three months he was writing only occasionally. Rod had driven into town two or three times and brought back word that Andrew seemed to be doing well. He was steady, and his employers were satisfied with him.

Mrs. Miner had been grieving over the failure of letters.

"Don't worry, Mother. Andy is all right. He has to work long hours. Grocers' clerks have longer hours than any others. He never was much of a hand to write, anyway."

That was three months after Andrew had gone to Colby. Another month had gone by and during that time no word came out to the farm about the boy. Rod was very busy, and could not spare time to go into town.

One evening, after the chores were done, and Mrs. Miner and Rod were in the sitting room, a knock at the door startled them. When Rod opened the door he was greeted by the nearest neighbor who lived four miles away.

"I drove over this evening, Mrs. Miner, with some news I thought you ought to hear," the man said slowly.

"Come in," said Rod briefly. Mrs. Miner rose, trembling, her hands shaking so that she dropped the ball of yarn she had been holding.

"Is it about Andy?" she asked.

"Yes," said the man, "I thought you ought to know—I—" He stopped awkwardly, and his rough fingers grasped the side of his chair with a nervous grip, as he faced the mother and son in that lonely prairie house, where the dim lamp on the table showed their anxious

faces, the mother bent forward with a trembling appeal that seemed like the countenance of heavy sorrows anticipatory of a blow she must receive, but from which her frail spirit could not recover.

* * * * * * * * *

Esther stopped. The audience was not expecting the end.

There was a sigh of disappointment among her listeners. Nobody applauded. She slowly walked back to her seat. Mr. Sage rose and said:

"Mr. Douglas will finish the story at 3 o'clock. We begin the afternoon program promptly at two. Everybody be on hand. Two hours for lunch."

The audience slowly scattered through the grove for their separate lunching places talking about the story.

"It's pretty harrowing, I think," said Mr. Edwards, while the Colby party was eating the good things Mrs. Edwards and Esther had prepared. "It's the solemnest I ever knew at a picnic."

"But do you know any temperance story that isn't harrowing?" asked Mr. Vernon. "In the nature of the case any thing the saloon has to do with is harrowing."

"But the saloon isn't in evidence yet. I suppose Douglas will see to that all right. Esther, I say, you did finely. Your chapter's all right. But it 'most made me lose my appetite. How's yours, George?"

He needn't have asked, for George was giving account of two apple pies and the larger part of a yellow-legged chicken.

"It takes more than that to spoil my appetite, Mr. Edwards."

"I believe you, George. Fox's Book of Martyrs wouldn't feaze you any."

After lunch the audience, increased in numbers by some late arrivals, began to fill up the seats again. The theme of conversation was evidently the outcome of the story. When, after the singing and recitations, Mr. Sage announced: "Chapter two of the Temperance story will be read by Mr. Frank Douglas, editor of the Colby Beacon,"

the vast crowd leaned forward and there was a hush of expectancy on the part of every listener.

Douglas had risen and taken one step towards the front of the platform when a sudden commotion began at his left where the crowd had edged up so close to the platform that the young men were sitting on it with their feet dangling over.

A man struggled through the crowd and getting up to the platform beckoned to Mr. Sage. He went over and leaned down to hear. Douglas waited. People began to stand up. A buzz of questions went over the audience.

Suddenly Mr. Sage stood up straight and exclaimed:

"Jake Lawson is selling beer to the boys down on the creek. This is my farm and Jake Lawson nor no other man is going to sell beer on my farm at this picnic, if I know it. Stay right where you are. I don't need no help more than I've got. I'll be back in a few minutes. Let the children sing something. Don't read until I come back."

He jumped down from the platform and the crowd opened to let him through.

"Let's all go," some one shouted.

"No," Mr. Sage's voice rose like the wind storm. "Stay where you be. I can settle this alone!"

The crowd sat down again as the children began to sing.

Five minutes went by, and the chorus had started another piece when suddenly there rang out sharp and clear two gun shots, one quickly after another. The entire audience of over four thousand people as one person rose to their feet and in the tension of the momentary silence that followed, another shot rang out.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next five minutes in Sage's grove witnessed a scene that was not down on the program, but it was the most thrilling of all the events of the day as things "not on the program," are very apt to be. Several hundred of the audience broke over the seats and rushed in an excited mob through the woods toward the sound of the gun shots. The creek bank which formed the natural amphitheater on which Mr. Sage had placed his seats, rose up to a bare knoll of land which commanded a wide and unobstructed view of the farm in all directions and before he knew just how they came to be impelled in that direction Douglas, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Vernon, George, Quits, and a large crowd were climbing up to the top of the knoll. Some boy who had been sitting up in a tree before the shots were heard had yelled, "He's after him in a buggy! There they go!" pointing in the direction beyond the top of the knoll. The crowd had turned and in the excitement the Colby party were swept up to the ridge and the bank with the rest.

Once there the sight that met their eyes was, as George exclaimed, "worth more than a circus!"

Across the prairie in full chase farmer Sage, in a buggy which he had pressed into service from a number down by the creek, was urging at the top of his speed an old white horse, and only a few rods in front Jake Lawson of Jake's place in Colby was lashing furiously

a big black horse attached to a light wagon in the rear of which the excited spectators could see several beer kegs bobbing about.

"It's white against black," Mr. Vernon remarked grimly.

"He's gaining on him! He's gaining!" Mr. Edwards exclaimed, in his excitement crushing Mrs. Edwards' hat into a shapeless mass between his hands. As the party had swept up the knoll Mrs. Edwards' hat had fallen off and Mr. Edwards had picked it up. "It will get stepped on if you don't," he said, when his wife told him not to stop for it.

"I don't believe he can catch him!" cried Douglas. "Ah!" the cry burst from a thousand people as they saw the saloon keeper turn and deliberately aim a gun at his pursuer. There was a puff of smoke and a report rang out over the prairie. Farmer Sage simply hit the old white horse with the lines, he had lost his whip at the start and leaned forward a little more. His old felt hat fell off and dropped behind the buggy.

"He didn't hit anything!" said George, dancing up and down. "I wish I was inside that old plug of a horse. I'd make him move as if he had swallowed a barrel of red pepper."

For the next half mile the race was nip and tuck. Pursuer and pursued were on the section road now and there was no turning out. But at the end of the half mile Jake Lawson pulled his horse quickly over into the wide stretch of unfenced prairie and lashing the animal into a gallop started down a long swale and for a few moments he was lost to view. Sage followed only a short distance behind and he also disappeared from the sight of the crowd on the knoll.

Suddenly Lawson appeared on top of a swell of the prairie, still whipping his horse and going at a hard gait. As he passed over the crest of the rise the spectators saw one of the beer kegs bounce up into the air and out of the rear of the wagon. It struck the ground and began to roll down the swell. Farmer Sage appeared but the white horse was winded and had been reduced to a walk. The beer keg gathering impetus as it rolled struck the animal full on the shins

and down he went to inglorious defeat. The spectators on the knoll could see farmer Sage jump from the buggy and run to the head of the animal. He succeeded in getting him to his feet again and then he picked up the beer keg and put it in the buggy, turned around, and slowly drove back. Jake Lawson was seen on top of the next rise shaking his fist at the entire Temperance picnic before he disappeared in the direction of Colby.

The crowd rushed down the hill to meet Mr. Sage who soon drove up covered with dirt and perspiration, but otherwise undisturbed.

"I'll learn 'em to try to sell beer on my farm," he said, as he lifted out the keg of beer and called for an ax. One was found in a buggy and putting the keg down near the edge of the creek Mr. Sage smashed in the head and the crowd cheered as the liquor ran down into the stream.

"He didn't hit you anywhere, did he?" asked Douglas.

"Didn't come within a yard. He fired four times. If I couldn't shoot straighter than that I wouldn't carry a gun," said farmer Sage contemptuously.

"There's a hole in your hat," said Mr. Edwards winking at the crowd.

"That's nother hole more or less. Come on now, folks. Let's get back to the performance."

"Wonder what he calls what we've just been gettin'," muttered George, who afterwards told Quits he hadn't had so much fun at a picnic since he couldn't remember when.

The crowd slowly recovered from the excitement and came back to the seats. In one sense the interruption was not a bad thing for Douglas. He had purposely made his chapter frankly local, and the appearance of Jake Lawson on the scene gave additional interest to the story of Andrew Miner and his mother.

Mr. Sage started the chorus and had them sing for a few minutes until the audience gathered. Then he introduced Douglas again, say-

ing briefly, "I don't think we'll be interrupted again." Douglas opened his chapter with the scene in the lonely farm house where Esther had left it.

* * * * * * * * *

"Is Andy dead? Don't tell me he is dead!" She put out her thin hands in a gesture of appeal towards the neighbor.

"No—he ain't dead," the man answered slowly. "But you know Jim Walker. Jim's been at Kellogg's now for two years. His father came in yesterday and told us he heard Jim had taken to drinking. And he was going in company with your boy. Bud Noble saw 'em both in at Jake's Place two weeks ago playing billiards."

"Is that all?" asked Rod, after a pause. His mother was sitting bent over, her hands over her face and sobbing softly.

The neighbor shuffled his feet awkwardly.

"Noble said both boys had been drinking some. I thought you ought to know. 'Taint easy to bring bad news. I wish to God the whole liquor business was in Hell!" the man added with an energy that was unexpected, as his dull eyes glowed with the fire of some past experience, in which the drink devil had had some part. And can you name a single family anywhere that has not at some time felt through relation, friend, or acquaintance, the blasting touch of this world-wide pestilence?

"It seems to me the business is there already," replied Rod with bitterness. His mother still continued her sobbing, but she was not violent. The man rose to go.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Miner. Wish I could do something for you."

"You can't do nothing, you, nor God, nor nobody," she said in a muffled voice, without rising from her position.

The neighbor did not even say good night. He simply walked out, and Rod could hear his wagon rumble away across the prairie.

"Come, Mother!" Rod spoke in a tone that sounded rough and

hard. "You go to bed. It's no use to cry over Andy. He's chosen his own course. Let him suffer for it. You nor I ain't to blame."

His mother raised her head timidly and touched the boy on the arm.

"Rod, won't you go into town tomorrow and see Andy?"

"What good will that do?"

"But won't you, Rod? Tell him he's killing me. And he promised. Tell him about his father."

"He knows about Father already."

"No, no, he don't, Rod!" The mother spoke with shrill earnestness. " He thinks Father was taken ill in Colby when we sent him in for the doctor. Remember, Rod, Andy was only nine years old then. Won't you go, Rod?"

"I'll go if you want me to, just to please you. But I know it won't do no good. Andy's got Father's blood in him. Nothing I can do nor you neither can keep Andy from drink now he's begun."

"But maybe God can!" Mrs. Miner almost shrieked it.

"I doubt it," Rod answered bitterly. "I don't believe God cares. If he does, why don't he strike Jake Lawson dead?"

"Rod, you must not talk so. God is love. If He ain't love we might as well all die and be done with it."

Rod did not answer. His moody spirit, crushed down under the stress of the lonesome life of hard toil he had known since a small child on the prairie farm, had little faith in a power which seemed to his narrow and bitter experience to be more relentless force than fatherly compassion. When he went to bed that night he had promised his mother again that he would go into Colby on the morrow, but he had no faith whatever that he could influence his brother, or prevail on him to break the habit of drinking now that he had begun it.

Since Andrew had left home, Rod had slept down stairs next to his mother's room. This night he wakened and lay there wondering as he heard the clock in the sitting room strike twelve. He was a

sound sleeper and his waking was not natural. As he tried to sleep again, a voice in his mother's room startled him. It was deep and strong, unwavering, and hard in its metallic rhythm. It set his senses at once on the alert, and a fear tugged at his heart as he listened.

"O God! do you care anything for your children like me? If so, why have you made this wide, lonesome prairie, and made me live on it? If you love me, why have you killed my husband and my three pretty little ones? It must be cold and dark for them out there in the grove nights! But, O God! if you really care, why don't you save my boy Andy? He is my baby, now my others are gone. I would save him if I could; but I'm not God. Won't you save him? He's young yet. Isn't he worth saving? Nobody don't care for him but me, but they ain't nursed him and cared for him after hard days' works the way I have. If you want to love anything the best way is to suffer for it. And I've suffered for that boy. I've sat up nights by his crib, when I was so tired I couldn't keep awake without burning my arm with a knitting needle heated over the lamp. O God! why do you let your children suffer so? We must be pretty wicked all these years to get all this punishment. But it seems to me sometimes as if the wrong people are punished. Why don't you punish Jake Lawson some? He's making money, and he seems happy. Why should my three little ones die because their father—O God! don't let Andy go to hell. Save him from hell, O God! Send me there in his place. Only I want to see my little ones again. They are with you, ain't they? They ain't in the ground, are they? Tell me, God, they ain't in the ground! They were just beginning to play. They were such good company for me when their father and the boys were at work. And our nearest neighbor four miles away. O God! I am lonesome. I've no one to play with. And now you're going to send Andy to hell. And it seems only last night I heard him say,

"'Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep—'

"Dear Lord! if you keep track of all the prayers that's said, won't you look up the number of times he said that prayer, and if he goes bad now won't you credit him with his baby prayers, so much in his favor? O Lord don't let him die forever! O God! save his soul! O God—"

As in Andrew's case, Rod could bear no more. He threw a blanket around him and went out into the sitting room and knocked at his mother's door.

"Mother! Mother! Are you ill? Do you want anything?"

The voice instantly ceased, and after a moment Rod opened the door and went in.

"Are you ill, Mother?"

"No," his mother spoke in her natural tone, but she was sobbing softly.

"There, don't cry, Mother. I'll go into town in the morning, and I'm sure Andy will straighten out. He's probably learned a lesson by this time."

"Do you think he will? Do you, Rod?"

"Yes, Mother. Don't worry. Go to sleep now."

"Did I waken you, Rod? I sometimes talk in my sleep."

"Well, well, Mother!" Rod replied evasively. "Don't worry. Go to sleep and forget all about Andy."

"I can't forget about him even in my sleep. I dreamt about him tonight. O Rod! do you think he's in danger?" She asked it trembling all over as she sat up. Rod could see by the dim light her strained, thin face, ghostlike, appealing to him. The sight irritated him, because it stirred memories of the past he wanted to forget.

"No, Mother!" he answered roughly. "Lie down and sleep. I tell you I'll go in and see Andy in the morning."

Mrs. Miner lay back submissively, and Rod started to go out. At the door he turned and said with a show of kindness,

"If you feel afraid or ill call me, Mother. I'll leave the door open. Good night."

"Good night, Rod," she said quietly enough; but the boy thought he could hear her sobbing again as he went back into his room.

In the morning he said nothing about the event of the night, and about ten o'clock he harnessed up and started for Colby.

"Don't worry, Mother," he said as he drove away.

"I'll try not to, Rod. But you'll be sure to tell Andy I love him, won't you? Don't be hard with him, will you, Rod?"

Rod did not answer. He wished afterwards that he had, as at a turn in the section road he saw his mother standing in the doorway still looking at him.

Half way to Colby a part of his harness broke, and it was afternoon before he had succeeded in mending it so as to start on. When within five miles of town he overtook a neighbor who was stuck in a slough with a load of hay. By the time he had helped him out and had hitched into his own wagon it was nearly five o'clock. He reached Colby about six, and drove at once to the store where Andy had been employed.

"Is Andrew Miner here?" he asked one of the clerks who was near the door.

"Miner, Miner? Oh, you mean Andy. He hasn't been working here for two weeks. The old man fired him because—" The clerk made a movement as if drinking out of a bottle. Rod asked him if he knew where Andy boarded.

"No, I don't. Might try Mrs. Wycoff's."

Rod drove up to Mrs. Wycoff's; but she knew nothing of Andy Miner.

By this time it was getting dark, and Rod drove the horses to a livery stable foreseeing a possible night in Colby. After getting supper at a restaurant, he started out to find his brother.

It was after seven o'clock, and Rod went at once into Jake's Place.

There were only a few men in the barroom, and he passed through into the rear room where the card tables were.

The minute he pushed open the swinging door he saw his brother and Jim Walker playing cards at a table in one corner.

He walked over at once and put his hand on Andy's shoulder.

The boy looked up and at the first glance Rod saw that even that early in the evening Andy had been drinking.

"Hello, Rod! Where'd you come from?" he said, showing a little confusion.

"Mother sent me," Rod answered briefly. "Come out of here. I want to talk with you."

"Let's finish the game first. We've only just begun. Your deal, Jim."

"No, you don't," Rod said roughly, and he leaned over and put his big hand on the cards. "You come right out. I want a talk with you and I don't want to wait. Mother will be anxious about my return. I've got a four hours' drive."

"You leave us alone!" Andrew exclaimed angrily, trying to pull the cards out from under Rod's hand. Rod's dark face grew darker.

"Andy, you drop that and come out of here or I'll drag you out by the hair. Jim Walker, I call you a miserable cur for getting my brother into this hole. If it wasn't for Andy here on my hands, I'd give you another smashing same's you got when I caught you trying to brand some of our calves down by Major's Creek. No, you don't!" Rod anticipated Jim Walker's movement to get his gun, and with a lightning grasp that did not seem possible in one ordinarily so slow he seized Walker's wrist and twisted it in a vise-like grip. Half a dozen young men entered the room at that moment. Rod let go of Walker and turned to Andy.

"Come out!" he said savagely, and Andy did not dare disobey. He rose and went out with Rod who backed towards the door with his eyes on the wrathful face of Jim Walker.

Out on the street Rod said abruptly,

"Have you got a room anywhere?"

"Yes," Andy said sullenly.

"We'll go to it," Rod said briefly.

When they were inside a dingy little room in a cheap boarding house, Rod sat down and faced his brother who was almost sober now, and whose face showed a mingling of fear, shame and anger.

"Mother and I got word of your drinking last night. Mother lay awake half the night over it. You've lost your job in the store. What are you doing? Anything?"

"I've got a job in the hotel," Andy said sullenly.

"Must be a fine job," Rod said with contempt. "You seem to be in Jake Lawson's employ most of the time. How much does he give you?"

"You go—" Andrew swore. Even Rod was startled at the oath. He had never heard Andy on the farm swear, even under great provocation.

He looked more carefully at his brother's face. How swiftly the devil brands his cattle! The boy's face showed already the unmistakable signs of dissipation, the coarsening and roughening of fiber and tissue.

"You are killing Mother, Andy," said Rod in a low tone. He related in a few words the experience of the night. Andrew seemed moved by it.

"I think Mother's mind is affected by all the trouble she has had, Andy." Rod spoke more softly. "She prayed as if she were another person. The tones of her voice were hard and unfeeling. It made me creep to listen to her. I've had to get her into the house three times from the graves since you went away."

"Mother has never got over that time," Andy spoke thoughtfully.

"No, and do you know, Andy, what makes that such a dreadful experience for Mother? It's not only the loss of the children Mother grieves over. You were only a little fellow at the time, and we never

told you. But as soon as Elizabeth came down Mother feared diphtheria and sent Father right into town for a doctor. He never came back until the day after and then it was too late. The doctor couldn't save them then. And do you know where Father was all that time, Andy?" Rod got up and his rough face twitched nervously under the stress of his passion. "He was in Jake Lawson's Place, drinking and gambling while our little sisters were choking to death on the farm, and Mother was going wild over it. Is it any wonder Mother's mind is weak after all that?

"And the constant lonesomeness and lack of neighbors and variety to take her thought off the death of the babies and Father. And now you go and tug at Mother's heart as if you didn't care, and help to make Jake Lawson rich by buying his beer and whiskey—the man who sold the stuff that killed Father and the children, and—"

"Don't Don't! Rod! I didn't know! I'll quit and behave myself!" cried Andy, breaking down and putting his face in his hands while Rod walked up and down like some wild beast.

"I haven't any faith in you, Andy, and might as well say so." Rod spoke with bitterness as he walked up and down past his brother. "You've got Father's blood in you. You'd drink and gamble if you knew Mother was going to die the next minute. She told me to tell you that she loved you. You know she does well enough. But you don't love her any. If you did, you wouldn't do as you have been doing."

"I do love her, Rod! I'll quit drinking and playing and behave myself."

"You say you will! Undress and get into bed! I've got to go home tonight or Mother will go wild. But I've no faith in your promises. The minute I start for home you'll make a bee line for Jake's Place," continued Rod.

"I won't! I tell you I won't!" replied Andrew, but he spoke

quietly and immediately obeyed his brother and went to bed. Rod walked moodily up and down.

"I'll tell Mother how I found you, and your promise. If you break it I hope Father and the babies will haunt your dreams as long as you live."

He turned to go out and Andrew said feebly, "Won't you tell Mother I am sorry, Rod?"

"I will if you act sorry for a month," replied Rod. He blew out the lamp and went away without any further good night, and immediately hitched up and started for home.

He had been gone about half an hour when Andrew heard a pebble strike his window. He drew the clothes up over his head and kept still. Another pebble struck the window a little harder. Then a shower of small stones. Still he made no answer. After a moment he heard a step coming up stairs. He remembered the door was not locked and started up in bed to lock it, but before he could do so it opened and some one came in.

"Is that you, Jim?" he asked.

"Yes. Came up to see how you were." Walker struck a match, lighted the lamp and sat down.

"I'm all right," said Andrew sullenly. "Why can't you let me alone?"

"You left in the middle of the game. I don't call that square."

"We can finish—"

"Tonight," said Walker coolly. "But it's too cold here. Get up and let's go over to Jake's and have it out. You owe me a game. It's mean to quit when I was losing."

"I can't, it's too late. I've promised Rod—I've promised—"

"Oh, well, you don't need to play more than one game."

"No, I won't do it, Jim. Go away and leave me alone."

In reply Jim Walker took a whiskey bottle out of his pocket and going over to the little washstand took up a tumbler and poured out a

drink. He came back to the table which was near the bed and set the glass down. The smell of the liquor began to pervade the little room. Andy's eyes began to glow with an unearthly luster and he sat up in bed. Jim tossed off the whiskey and poured out some more.

"What makes you keep your room so cold? Have a nip just to warm you up?"

"No," said Andy, but he eyed the liquor greedily.

Walker drank again, and again filled up the glass.

"It was a mean trick to cheat me out of the game. And after all the times I've stood by you to leave me in the lurch was a mean, dirty trick." He swore and drank again, setting the glass down on the edge of the table nearest the bed. Then he suddenly got up and walked over to the window and looked out.

"It's a cold night. Looks as if a storm was coming up."

He stood with his back to Andy but he knew what was happening. Andy had reached out his arm, taken a hasty drink of the whiskey, and set the glass down again.

Jim turned around and walked back to the table.

"Andy, do you think it was just the thing to cheat me out of that game?"

"I never cheated!"

"You did. You left before it was through. It would only be fair to finish. You needn't play any more if you don't care. If you'll come over to Jake's I'll set up the drinks."

"We'll just finish the game?" Andy said feebly.

"Yes, that's all. It's not late. Only nine o'clock. Come on, that's a good fellow. Remember how I've pulled you out of a hole many a time."

Andy got up and dressed and in twenty minutes was seated with Jim Walker at one of the tables in the wine room at Jake's Place, his brain reeling, his nerves on fire with whiskey which he had begun to drink recklessly as soon as the cards were served.

The drunkard's chance at cards seemed to favor him. Game after game saw him winner. The stake was not large, but before eleven o'clock Walker had lost all his own money and several small sums he had borrowed of acquaintances.

At last in a spasm of intruding conscience, Andy threw down the cards and declared he would play no more. He swept up his earnings and poured them into his coat pocket staggering to his feet as he did so. Walker rose with an oath and tried to detain him.

"Play it out! You've no right to quit now!"

"Right to quit any time. Wrong not to quit," Andy said, and before Walker could stop him he had gone around another table and out of the side door.

Walker followed, still swearing. "I'll even up with you for that brother of yours," he said following Andy up the street.

Andy turned and shook his fist at him. They were both in the middle of the street and both continued to stagger along cursing each other. As they came opposite the Methodist church, Andy stopped and waited for Walker to come up.

"Leave following me!" he exclaimed.

"I won't! You've got my money. You—you cheated!"

"I didn't! You lie!" Andy replied in a drunken rage.

He stooped over to pick up a stone in the street and Walker fired at him three times in succession. Andy reeled, took one step towards Walker, and fell face downwards in the dirt. Walker threw his revolver into the gutter, and then turned and ran back in the direction of the saloon. Andy lay still in the place where he had fallen, and one more crime was added to the thousands upon thousands that drink and the saloon have helped to produce since alcohol was first brewed by man out of God's bread stuff.

It was nearly midnight when Rod reached home. He had driven as fast as he dared, thinking all the time of the brother he had left and his mother who was waiting for him.

She came to the door as he drove up, and before he had stopped the horses she called out,

"Tell me, Rod! Is Andy all right? Is he safe?"

"Yes, yes, Mother. I left him in bed in his room. He promised to give up the drink and the cards and—"

Rod drove out to the barn, put up the team and came back to the house where he finished telling his mother the story of the evening.

Mrs. Miner, who had spent a long day and evening in a fever of apprehension, was quieted by his narrative.

"Then you do think he will grow up to be a good man, don't you, Rod? He will learn a lesson from it, won't he?"

"I hope so." Rod spoke slowly. He did not tell his mother what he had said to Andy.

Mrs. Miner went to bed and to sleep. In the morning Rod heard her singing as she was washing the breakfast dishes.

She had not done that for months. The boy went up to her and kissed her, a very unusual thing for him.

"I'm glad you feel so well, Mother," he said.

"It's on account of Andy," she said. "He's my baby, you know. But you're both good boys to me."

"I'm going to work at the fence down in the two mile swale this morning, Mother, so I may not get back at noon. But I'll come between twelve and one sometime."

"All right, Rod. Don't break your back over those heavy posts. You don't ever have any rest."

"I don't need any, Mother. One of these days when we get the farm paid for, I mean to see that you have a rest for the remainder of your days."

His mother smiled at him, and noticed his sturdy figure as he drove the team out of the barn yard.

"I've got two good boys. Andy's going to be all right, I'm sure," she said, as she continued to sing at her work.

About eleven o'clock a man drove up in front of the little farm house and got down slowly. The horse was covered with lather and stood panting with exhaustion.

Mrs. Miner came to the door.

"Are you Mrs. Miner?" the man asked.

"Yes."

"I've a letter for you." The man handed it to her and avoided her look.

It was from the Methodist minister and it contained news of an accident to Andy. She was asked to go with the messenger back to Colby at once.

Mrs. Miner read the letter slowly, and raised her eyes to the man.

"Tell me the truth about this—accident," she exclaimed, with a calmness that astonished him.

"He was shot," the man said after a silence, and again he looked down.

"And killed?" she asked, taking a step towards him.

The man looked up at her.

"He was killed, wasn't he?" she said gently.

The man choked down something.

"Yes, ma'am, he was. I'm awful sorry. It must be a dreadful blow to—"

"Three of my little ones gone, and now Andy. But he was safe—" she began to reel on her feet, and the man hastily took hold of her and helped her into the house and upon the couch.

"Where's your other son?" he asked. "You need him now."

She told him quite coherently, and immediately began to talk about her three pretty little ones. The man hesitated, but finally went out and drove as fast as his horse could go down to the two mile swale. He found Rod there and at once told him the news of Andy's death, and the way his mother had taken it.

Rod got into the buggy at once and came back to the house.

His mother was not there. He ran out of the house and over to the cottonwood grove where the four graves were.

He found his mother seated on his father's grave, with her back to the other three, making some lines on the ground. As Rod laid his hand on her shoulder she said with a smile, "Yes, there is room for another right here. I have been measuring. See, Rod. One, two, three, four, five, six feet this way, and one, two, three feet this way. Only, it's cold here, when it storms. Couldn't we, couldn't we, Rod, take 'em into the house when it rains? It's so cold out here."

"Come, Mother," Rod spoke between his clenched teeth to shut down fierce sobs; "come, you are not well. Come into the house."

"No! I will not come! I am going to stay here until they bring him to me. I am going to dig his grave! There is no one who can dig his grave like me. I made all his baby clothes."

She leaned over and began to dig in the ground with the cottonwood stake she had in her hand. When Rod attempted to lead her away she turned upon him fiercely and struck at him. He put his powerful arms about her and carried her into the house, and she shrieked and bit him on the cheek so that the blood ran down his face as he laid her on the bed.

The man went back to Colby alone and that evening a doctor came out. Rod had never left his mother's side. The doctor gave no hope. That trembling reason which had faltered and fallen on the side of madness during those moments when the stricken mother prayed her crazy prayer, had now altogether left the throne and what was left was a dangerous maniacal power that called for incessant watchfulness. As soon as the legal steps could be taken, Rod placed his mother in the state asylum and went back to the lonely farm, a brooding, bitter, hard young life, known among the scattered neighbors in that township as uncompanionable and silent, the tragedy of drink branded into what might otherwise have been one of the stalwart, useful children of men.

In the state asylum there is a woman who every night in her padded cell is heard to pray for her baby Andy. It is the same prayer of accusation and petition. The attendants know it by heart, and pay no more attention to it than to the ravings of their other patients. The Methodist minister who once heard it on a visit to the asylum, did not recover from the effect for weeks, and says it was the most pitiable thing he ever listened to.

Jake Lawson, the saloon man is getting rich. He drives one of the best turnouts in Colby. He is putting a large addition to his house this summer. Jim Walker got off on a plea of self-defense, and is one of Lawson's best customers. And the prayers of widows and mothers all over the world still go up to God. Is God dead that he does not hear? And are men dead to all love and justice that they still license and support the only institution in the world which has centuries to its record of producing crime, insanity, pauperism, broken hearts, and ruined lives? Are they wasted? Make answer, Brothers and Sisters. For the blood of these little ones and these crushed ones cries out to us from the ground.

* * * * * * * * *

When Douglas finished and walked back to his seat, for a moment there was the most intense silence all over the audience. Then a faint hand clapping began. It grew in volume until it swept up over the rows of seats like a wind among the leaves. Again it was taken up and Douglas had to rise and bow. But the audience kept on applauding and Mr. Vernon turned to Esther.

"They want you to go forward with Douglas."

Esther blushed, but Mr. Sage settled the matter by getting up and taking Esther by one hand and Douglas by the other and leading them up to the front of the platform when the crowd cheered again.

"Your chapter was better than mine, Frank," Esther said as they took their seats.

"You were my inspiration," he replied. "But I don't agree with your statement."

Mr. Sage introduced Mr. Vernon as the last speaker on the program and Mr. Vernon went forward. The minister had watched the crowd during the story reading and saw his opportunity.

"I'm not going to make any speech," he said. "I'm going to let you make it. The best way to close this most remarkable picnic in the history of Payson township is for all of us to go on record against the saloon and the drink and all they represent. So I propose that everybody here sign the pledge and promise Almighty God to do everything in our power from this day by votes and prayers and daily lives to annihilate the liquor business around the world."

There was a moment's silence. Then the crowd applauded again. Evidently the minister had rightly interpreted the spirit of the audience and the impression made upon it by the reading of the story. Douglas had not followed the real facts in the case of Mrs. Lane's boy with literal exactness but he had retained the main facts as they had actually occurred. Every farmer in Payson township was familiar with the tragedy. The use of Jake Lawson's name and the appearance of that individual in the grove that day had helped to give the reading of Douglas' chapter intense interest to all present. So Mr. Vernon reckoned quite truly that a good time had struck for pressing home the truth in a practical way.

Before that memorable day closed over three thousand persons in Sage's grove had signed the pledge and had also thereby practically gone on record to act politically against the saloon. Out of the three thousand names signed there were over 700 men, old and young. It was a surprise to the local politicians present and furnished material for conversation during the entire drive back to Colby.

"Well, this has been a big day for Anderson county, Douglas," said Mr. Vernon when the Colby party was on the road home after a hearty farewell from Mr. Sage and a promise to be present at the

next one. "I regard to-day's work as specially significant. It will have its effect on the whole state."

"The whole thing was just a busting success!" Mr. Edwards exclaimed. "Esther and Douglas simply covered themselves with glory. I declare I felt so sorry for that Mrs. Miner that I would have signed the pledge a hundred times if it would make her happy."

"I hope you feel sorry for me too, James," said Mrs. Edwards, who was riding back home with a scarf thrown over her head in place of her hat, which had been left behind a hopeless ruin.

"I'll buy you six hats, and bake you six pies, Julia, first thing in the morning. My! But we have had a glorious day. Have you enjoyed it, George?"

"Yes, sir. That hoss race was the finest thing I've seen this summer."

"Wasn't it!" Mr. Edwards chuckled. "Farmer Sage leaning over the dash board slapping that old plug with the lines, paying no more attention to Jake Lawson's pop, pop, pop, than if they were so many flies. And the beer kegs bobbing up and down and that one hitting the old horse on the shins. It will be a long time before we see anything like it again."

"Will Sage do anything about Jake's firing at him?" asked Quits.

"No. But I don't believe Jake will ever come out to a temperance picnic again."

Mr. Edwards was mistaken.

Jake Lawson figured in more than one of farmer Sage's picnics. But he was allowed to go his way this time for all Colby was soon roused over another event which made vital history for the Beacon and changed the current of public sentiment to a very marked degree.

In the following week's issue of the Beacon Douglas wrote up the day's experience at Sage's grove and followed it up the week after by urging a pledge-signing crusade all over the county. At the request of very many of Mr. Sage's neighbors and especially of Mr. Sage him-

self he printed the temperance story in the Beacon making four installments of it retaining Jake Lawson's name as it appeared in the reading. A copy of the paper was sent to Lawson, and Douglas heard through other sources that he was enraged at the quantity and style of advertising he was receiving.

Friday night of that week Douglas went out of the office about ten o'clock in the evening to go to his room for some proofs he had taken home with him. Of late he had been in the habit of staying down to the office Fridays until nearly midnight.

He had just reached his room which was at the Wycoff's when he felt a tremendous explosion that jarred all the windows and was followed by a duller sound like a falling wall.

He ran down stairs and out on the street. Already the sidewalks were lined with terrified, excited people.

"What is it?" Douglas asked the first man he ran into.

"I don't know."

"Down town," someone else said.

Douglas started to run down to the office.

As he ran he heard someone say the explosion, or whatever it was, was in the vicinity of the Beacon office.

But when he reached the spot he was wholly unprepared for the sight that greeted him and the large crowd gathered there.

The entire front of the Beacon office was blown out as clean as if it had been removed a stick at a time by hand. Inside the smoke and plaster dust were still so dense that little was plainly visible but as the dust settled the ruin looked ghastly. One small portion of the old press was sticking to a corner of the room where it had been blown and the flooring of the room overhead, which had been used as storage for furniture, had been torn away, letting piles of shattered furniture through gaping holes as large as a wagon. The entire office was wrecked completely, the press ruined and the type, paper,

and fixtures scattered across the street and shattered against the adjoining building.

But the first thought that Douglas had was not concerning the building. His heart stood still as he thought of Quits and George. The next minute he had dashed into the wrecked office calling out their names, a great fear seizing him as he ran and called.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOUGLAS had not taken half a dozen steps into the wrecked building before he stumbled over a pile of broken furniture and fell down. Before he could regain his feet someone had taken hold of him and was lifting him up. It was Mr. Edwards who, with several men had rushed into the building behind Douglas.

"Quits! George!" Douglas stammered. Mr. Edwards understood in a moment and together he and Douglas climbed over a pile of rubbish and through a tangled heap of confused and ruined chairs, tables, and fixtures.

At the extreme rear of the room near the back door, Douglas, and Mr. Edwards found George pinned down under a part of the old press and evidently just beginning to regain consciousness. As they lifted off the weight from his body he opened his eyes and said with a gleam of his old habits, "What hit me? The office towel?"

Douglas could not help smiling even as he kneeled over the boy and wiped some blood and grime from his face.

"Are you hurt, George? It's a miracle you're alive. Where are you hurt?"

Douglas was feeling of him to see if any bones were broken. George sat up and opened his eyes wide and Douglas heard him mutter, "The old press is a goner this time. It seemed to have a great attachment for me," he added as he looked down and saw the fragment that had fallen on him.

"Where is Quits?" Douglas asked, his fears for George quite dispelled, but his anxiety for the pressman was keen and strong as he listened to Mr. Edwards and the rest searching for him in the ruins.

George grinned and although his inky face covered with blood and plaster was not particularly beautiful, Douglas thought at the time that it was unusually attractive.

"Quits isn't in it with me. He stepped out of the office five minutes before the ball opened to go up to Jake's Place and persuade Joe Roberts to come out. You know he's been after Joe for some time. My! But ain't I glad he ain't killed with me!" George uttered the words with a smile, but the next moment he fell over and fainted away. When they carried him out Mr. Edwards insisted on having him taken to his house. Once there it was found that he had sustained a fracture of one leg below the knee besides numerous cuts about the head and body.

Quits came in a few moments later while Douglas and Edwards and Vernon were together with the doctor at the Edwardses' house.

He knew nothing of the explosion nor its cause. He had gone up to Jake's Place to find Joe Roberts a young man in whom he had become interested at the boarding house. He had stepped into Jake's Place but had not found the boy there. Jake himself was behind the bar and gave Quits a scowl as he passed out to search for Joe in one of the other saloons. Then came the explosion and Quits had rushed with everybody else to the scene of it but not before George had been taken out and carried up to the house.

Mrs. Edwards nursed George as if she had been his own mother. The next day resting comfortably with his leg in a cast and various interesting bandages adding to the general picturesqueness of his head and countenance, the boy told all he knew about the accident.

"Just after Quits went out I went to the back of the office to use the trimmer. Something went wrong with the lever and I was under the thing on my knees, (not praying, Mr. Douglas, but sort of asking

a blessing on the old machine, when it seemed to me as if a comet hit in the front end of the office and the room was as bright as glory. Then there was a fizzing sound like a soda water fountain only different and next minute before I had time to get out from under the trimmer the whole office seemed to lift right up under me and the comet seemed to be having a prize fight with a cyclone. Something hit me below the belt and that's all I remember until Mr. Douglas was looking at me."

"It was a good thing for you, George, that you were under the old trimmer when the comet went off. The frame of the trimmer broke the fall of stuff over you and probably saved your life."

"The old trimmer owed me a good turn, Mr. Douglas. Many's the time I've doctored it when it was on its last legs from paralysis and heart failure. But what'll we do now? Even Quits can't mend up the press now, can he?"

"Hardly," said Quits gravely with a smile of regard for George. "But we hope to mend you up all right. What do we care for the press when you are saved?"

"No! You could get plenty of boys if I had been pied for good," said George pretending indifference. "But what'll the Beacon do now, Mr. Douglas? We can't get out even a meat market edition now."

"I don't know yet what we'll do," Douglas replied soberly. "I'm so thankful that you and Quits were not killed that I haven't thought much about the future of the paper."

"It wouldn't be hard to guess where that comet came from," Mr. Edwards said.

"We can't prove anything," Mr. Vernon added. "Our parsonage at Leander was partly wrecked one night by a bomb or something. It was almost a moral certainty that the whiskey men were at the bottom of the outrage as they have been proved to be in scores of such cases in this country, but we could never prove it. Quits himself is witness that Jake was in his saloon only a few minutes before so he

it is just as certain, too, that Douglas has not been keeping a supply personally could not have had anything to do with the explosion. And of comets and bombs lying around loose in the Beacon office."

"Whatever caused it, one thing is very certain," said Douglas; "the loss to the Beacon is complete. There isn't a dollar's worth of property left. Even our subscribers' lists are missing and we have no duplicate or copy."

The men were silent. Esther came into the room. She had been with Douglas and Mr. Edwards to look at the ruin, and had just returned in time to hear George's story.

"Are you going to give up?" she said to Douglas, as she had said that night after the election when he had let her know his feeling toward her.

"No, not if I can get anything at all to print a paper with. But what can I do without a press or type, or a place to work. I cannot make bricks without clay and straw too."

"I believe the way will open up for you," said Mr. Edwards cheerfully. "I don't see how, myself, but I believe it will. There's that store room of Clark's down by the depot. I'll see if you can't get that for temporary use anyhow."

"How much would a new press cost? asked Esther.

Douglas looked at her and hesitated.

"I couldn't get anything worth while short of six hundred dollars."

Esther went out of the room and Douglas looked embarrassed. She came back in a few moments and going right up to Douglas put something into his hands.

"There's one hundred dollars towards it," she said with a smile.

Douglas turned red. Then he put the money back into Esther's hands with sudden gesture.

"I can't take your money, Esther. It isn't fair. The idea of a big grown up man like me dependent on a girl for his business—"

"But you have already established a precedent, sir," replied Esther smiling at him, "by being dependent on this same girl before."

"I know I have," Douglas answered desperately. "But that's just it. I don't feel as if it was at all the thing to do." Douglas was in real distress over it, but Esther smiled and laid the money down on the table.

"I have offered it to you in good faith and I don't see why it isn't just as good as if you had to borrow of somebody and pay high interest."

"I would feel different about it if—if—" Douglas stammered.

"If what?" Esther laughed, Douglas looked so troubled.

"If we were married," replied Douglas, and it was Esther's turn to show confusion.

"Well, I don't see anything to hinder," remarked Mr. Edwards. "Here is Mr. Vernon and if he'll wait here ten minutes I'll get the license for you. It's a little sudden to provide all the cake and fixings but we can open a can of something and there's a pie in the pantry or I'm mistaken, eh, George?"

"Am I invited?" asked George, in his excitement getting up on one elbow.

"To what?" asked Mr. Edwards.

"To the wedding."

"Oh, I thought may be to the pie. Of course you're invited. Where's my hat, Julia?"

Douglas had led Esther into the other end of the room. They were having an animated talk together. Finally they came back to the group near George's bed.

"Esther has promised to marry me—" began Douglas, and Mr. Edwards exclaimed, "Good for her!" and started towards the door, his wife laughingly pulling at his coat.

"Promised to marry me as soon as the high school term is out next spring."

"It was the only way I could prevail on the foolish one to take the money!" cried Esther blushing but looking supremely happy.

"I don't see why you couldn't have it done right here and now," grumbled Edwards. "Esther will not look half so pretty, nor so healthy after she's slaved for several months over the bride's trousseau. Esther is so much given over to love of fine clothes!"

"I have very little money to spend for dresses now!" Esther said merrily as she put the one hundred dollars into Douglas' hands again. He took it gravely and not even Esther knew the depth of the vow he registered that day to prove worthy of her unbounded faith in him and the paper. It made him tremble to think that this unselfish, whole-hearted, buoyant spirit was joined to his life "for better, for worse." He felt deeply humble in the face of that human divine companionship, and thanked God for it, as for a gift beyond the possibility of purchase by earth's wealth, a gift of the Almighty to the children of men, to cheer and bless them as they journeyed together over the path of life.

But neither Douglas nor Esther nor any of the friends of the Beacon realized the force of the sentiment that was created for the paper by the attempt made to wipe it out. There was no direct proof that the saloon element was guilty but Anderson county and Colby jumped at the conclusions and after events demonstrated the accuracy of their conclusions. Mayor Bartlett at once offered Douglas the use of his office for the publication of the Beacon and in a manly editorial in the Sentinel denounced the outrage as an act of barbarism. Douglas felt again that in some ways the mayor was not totally depraved, and gave him credit at least for newspaper courtesy of the orthodox sort. He did not, however, accept the mayor's offer, not for personal reasons but because the way unexpectedly opened for him to print the Beacon on his own press.

He was in Mr. Edwards' store three days after the explosion talking over with him the facts about his mail which had begun to increase

with every delivery, and telling Mr. Edwards of the surprising contents of some of the letters he was receiving.

"Nearly a hundred dollars was sent in, in small sums, by subscribers all over the county. What do you think of that?"

"Think it's a sign of the times," Edwards replied promptly. "You'll have that press all right. Might as well open up your office in Clark's building. He told me this morning that you could have it if you wanted it. The location isn't bad and the rent won't be as high as on the street."

Douglas went down to see the building that afternoon, and found it better than he had supposed. He at once moved into the building with some cheap office furniture. Two days later while going over his mail, with Quits looking over a case of type which had been collected from the ruins of the Beacon office, farmer Sage walked in, and greeted Douglas heartily.

"Brought you a few subscriptions," he said, after asking a few questions about the explosion.

He put his hands in his big overcoat pockets and poured out on the desk in front of Douglas a great heap of small coin and bills.

"One hundred and seventy-five dollars, I make it," he said. "And here's a list of the subscribers." He handed the astonished editor a paper containing fifty names of farmers in Payson township.

"Jake Lawson never did a better day's work for the Beacon in all his life if he was the man who had anything to do with that bomb. You'd be surprised if you knew how many friends that outrage has made for you. No thanks. It's no more than your due. Give us the best paper on earth and you'll find us all right. I've marked those who have paid for the paper and all the rest is voluntary contributions. There'll be a little more and I'll send it in."

That afternoon by Mr. Edwards' advice Douglas wrote to a firm in Clinton for a press. He knew just what he wanted and the Clinton firm promptly responded. Before the end of that week the new press was being set up in the new quarters and the proudest man in all Colby

was Quits as he helped the Clinton man and Douglas to put it together.

They were at work at it when Mr. Edwards came in and asked Douglas to stop a moment. Douglas sat down with his friend and Edwards with an astonishing wink of satisfaction asked,

"How much are the contributions up to date?"

Douglas figured a moment.

"Five hundred and thirty-four dollars and fifty-three cents. Esther's contribution was $100. Mr. Sage brought in $175 and has sent in $23.78 since. And I've received by mail $235.75. I am simply overwhelmed, Mr. Edwards, by this. It's like a story."

"So are most things in real life. Thought maybe you might need a little something for type and paper so I brought in this."

He took out a paper and laid it down in front of the astonished young editor.

It was a list of business men and church members, including a great many women, who had contributed to the fund for starting the paper again. Mr. Edwards had headed the list with $100 and had been circulating it himself quietly from the very day after the explosion. Douglas almost lost his breath when he read the total at the foot of the list. It summed up $417.18 and ensured the purchase not only of the new press but type and paper and other necessary fixtures for the office.

He sat looking at his friend with his eyes dim and his heart full.

"How can I thank you, dear friend?"

"Don't try," said Mr. Edwards briskly. "Give us the best paper going. The people are greatly with you. That bomb was heard all over the state. And it wrecked more saloons than all the prayers of the churches, or I'm a sinner. It was better for you than a fire on an old building covered with insurance. Good luck to you! No, I won't stop. It's your busy day. If you need any one to open your mail I'll send Banks over."

He went out as he usually did on the run, and Douglas feeling as if the whole explosion was a dream went over to help finish putting the new press in order.

It was no dream however and the little group of friends will not soon forget the event when a few days later the first numbers of the new Beacon in its fresh dress of type came off the new press. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, Esther, Mr. Vernon and his wife, and half a dozen interested friends were present, including George, who was almost well and hobbled down to the new office with the help of a pair of crutches.

"You must have been living on pie at the Edwardses'," said Quits as George stood by the press and stroked it as a lover of a horse might touch a favorite animal.

"I believe George is shamming about that fracture and is staying on at the Edwardses' just for the free board," said Douglas mischievously. "He is getting fat. The only fracture that he has, I believe, is the one connected with his stomach. That has a crack in it that an extra edition of pie couldn't fill."

George looked unusually disturbed and did not venture to reply.

"Don't let them guy you, George. As long as I have a crust of pie left you shall share with me."

"Yes, indeed," Mrs. Edwards added, patting George on the head affectionately. "It has done me good to see you eat. Mr. Edwards has had hard work to keep up with you."

Every body laughed and George noticed something about the office needing his attention now, and the papers began to come off the rack, and he was lost in admiration of the machine. The next day he insisted on coming down, and sat around helping with the mail and whatever else he could do that did not require walking or standing, holding high carnival of conversation with Quits over the marvelous good fortune of the Beacon and predicting the election of the editor to

the position of State Printer by the next legislature to say nothing of future political and journalistic honors.

"Mr. Douglas may be governor of the state sometime," Quits ventured in his slow, grave fashion.

"Governor!" George said with some contempt. "What is the use of being governor when you can make governors? And that's what the press does. It makes governors and presidents. If it wasn't for the press governors and presidents couldn't be elected. There wouldn't be any one to tell the common people who to vote for. They wouldn't know any more than so many cattle who to vote for if papers like the Beacon didn't give them directions."

"And papers like the Sentinel," said Quits slyly.

"Huh! Who pays any attention to the editorials of the Sentinel? Do you suppose if their office got blown up the saloon men would put up contributions to buy it a new press? The Sentinel ain't in it with the Beacon."

"Bartlett has the county printing," said Quits, just to make George talk.

"He has now. But wait till the Beacon gets 5,000 subscribers. Then we'll show him. If we could only get blown up again in a year or two it would probably double our subscription list. We've almost twice as many as we used to have."

"I don't think Mr. Douglas would care to increase his list by that process though, and I should think you had had enough of getting blown up."

"I don't care for myself much, especially if I could get another go at Mrs. Edwards' pie," said George as he hobbled over to the press and stood looking at it with admiring regard. "But I'd hate to have anything happen to this beauty."

With its new launching on the ocean of popularity and the unexpected financial support, Douglas, during the months that followed, almost trembling at the success of the Beacon, lived in an atmosphere

charged with high resolves and keen ambitions. He was obliged to add another hand to the office force to assist Quits. George at first regarded the new comer with distrust, but finding in a few days that he was a quiet, unassuming printer, he gradually received him into the circle and began to talk about the pressing need of type setting machines to meet the growing demand of the Beacon business. Douglas put a great deal of hard work into his editorial page, and viewed with pardonable satisfaction his surely growing subscription list, which now numbered over forty-seven hundred. It pleased him also to find in the exchanges out over the state more and more complimentary comment on the Beacon and quite frequent quotations from its editorials.

But even the inspiration attending all this success paled into common things before the event in June, when Esther and Douglas were married. As the day drew near there was a noticeable excitement in the air of the Beacon office and at the Edwardses', where the ceremony was to take place.

"Father is willing to come over here. He and Aunt have moved into another house since Mother's death, so it would not seem like home to me there," Esther had said.

"We are delighted," Mrs. Edwards had replied. "But Mr. Edwards and I can hardly forgive you and Frank for not rooming with us for a while."

"Frank wants to begin housekeeping," Esther said referring to an arrangement Douglas had made to rent a cottage about two blocks from the office.

"That's all right!" Mr. Edwards commented heartily. "Anything but a boarding house or a hotel for young married people. I'd rather open a can of beans and eat 'em cold out of the can sitting on the edge of the kitchen sink in my own little home than sit down to a table d' hote dinner in the best boarding house on earth. You show sense in beginning the way you do. That is what your mother did and that's what Mrs. Edwards and I did. Remember, Julia, that first pie

you baked after we were married!" Mrs. Edwards gave him a warning look, but he pretended not to see it. "The juice ran out and glued the pie pan to the bottom of the stove oven and I had to cut it loose with a hatchet."

"Why, James Edwards! It was not a hatchet!"

"It was a carving knife or the poker then. But when we got it loose from the oven we couldn't get it out of the pan and we had to eat it with a spoon all except the bottom crust, which was burned on to the pan like a porcelain glaze."

"Why, James Edwards! It was no such thing!" Mrs. Edwards said with some feeling, but the look that her husband gave her was so comical that she burst out laughing, and Esther and Douglas joined her merrily for their hearts were jubilant over the future, and their honest faith in each other was, as Mrs. Edwards said, one of the finest things she had ever witnessed.

A few days before the wedding George came to Douglas and with more embarrassment than the editor of the Beacon had ever known him to exhibit he said,

"Mr. Douglas—who—who—are you going to have write it up?"

"Write what up?"

"Why your—your wedding?"

"Write it up! Nobody, I hope!"

Douglas replied almost angrily.

"I—I—didn't mean any offense, Mr. Douglas," George went on doggedly and with such a solemn look that Douglas softened at once. "Only I thought I wondered if you—if you would be willing to have me write up something for the Clinton Mail. Their correspondent here in Colby is a chump and don't know a demi-train from a point lace chiffon. I could give them the real facts. Besides their correspondent, you know him, Clem Burroughs—parts his hair in the center and uses cologne and works in Carely's drug store—he won't be present, will he?"

"I should think not!" replied Douglas indignantly. There will be no one present except the Edwardses, the Vernons, Miss Harris' father and aunt, and Quits and you."

"And yourself, I suppose," said George soberly.

"Why, yes, I hope to be there."

"And Miss Harris will be present, I suppose?"

"I suppose she will. But I did not know you wrote for publication, George."

"But I do," said George flushing proudly.

He took out of a pocket book that contained a miscellaneous collection of bric a brac, some folded newspaper clippings and handed them over to Douglas.

They were from the Clinton Mail and under the caption of Thinklets. Some of them were so preposterously funny that as Douglas glanced through them he roared. George regarded him with unusual solemnity.

"What does the Mail give you for these?" Douglas asked looking at George with some added respect.

George hesitated. "They don't give me much of anything."

"I'll give you two dollars a week for them."

"You will! But I don't think I can furnish them every week. They don't come to me only now and then."

"Well, I'll give you two dollars for an installment now and then."

"May I use a nom de plume?"

"As many as you like. Does the editor of the Mail know who you are?"

"I don't think so," George replied with a grin. "I suspect he thinks maybe you are the author."

"I? How so?"

"Why my nom de plume is Dug-Out. These Thinklets are not so easy to get. They come hard. I think the editor of the Mail sees in the 'Dug' the first syllable of your name."

Douglas laughed until he cried. George stood looking at him in the same solemn manner.

"But you have not told me about the write up for the Mail. Honest, Mr. Douglas, I'll do my best with it. You can read it over to see if it's all right. We can't very well have a write up in the Beacon, can we?"

"Hardly. But—well. I don't care. Yes, you can write it for the Mail if you let me see it before it is sent."

"All right, Mr. Douglas. I couldn't bear to think of that Burroughs handling the matter. He wouldn't have no more sense of the affair than if it was an ordinary prescription of quinine or some old drug."

When the happy day came it proved to be one of the most perfect June days the two lovers had ever seen. It was before the era of "showers" for the bride, but in the library room was a small display of gifts sent by Esther's friends. Mr. Edwards, who was nothing if not practical, gave a handsome dining room table, Mrs. Edwards a full set of table linen. The Vernons contributed some silver ware. Esther's father presented them with a set of furniture, and the aunt with a dozen standard authors. Quits' gift was a tasteful picture for the parlor, and George sent a box of highly colored and especially highly scented toilet soap together with half a dozen towels accompanied with some original verses set up by himself and run off on the galley. The whole gift convulsed Douglas and Esther and the sight of George himself that night, dressed in a new suit and in tortures over a high collar and a white tie, nearly upset Douglas during the ceremony.

After it was over, and they were all seated at the banquet table there was quite a solemn pause after Mr. Vernon had asked grace. Mr. Edwards broke the ice by getting up and going into the other room. He came back bearing two packages.

He set the first one down in front of the bride and groom winking at the company.

Esther opened the package and found a large blank book with a cover which was a facsimile of the first number of the Beacon, and a page of directions explaining the purpose of the volume.

"It's nothing but a newspaper scrap book, Esther," Mr. Edwards explained. "You're a school ma'am no longer. You're an editor's wife. But you'll see from the directions that you can use the book to paste in cuttings that bear on the temperance question in the state. There is nothing more interesting in the county at present."

The other package Mr. Edwards took out of a bag and set it down in front of the embarrassed George. It was an apple pie of unusual size ornamented on top with the boy's initials in red lozenges.

"I thought maybe George would feel lonesome if he didn't have something to occupy his mind," Mr. Edwards said. "And so I had Wallace the baker make this to order. If you can lift your mouth over the edge of your collar, George, you'll find that pie all right."

This effectually broke up all the ice that was left and the banquet was proceeding merrily when Douglas exclaimed,

"I declare I forgot my gift to the bride."

"Didn't you kiss her? If you forgot it, I'll do it for you with pleasure," said Edwards.

Douglas took out a letter and handed it to Esther.

"With the compliments of the editor, Mrs. Douglas," he said.

Esther colored beautifully and opened the letter. For a moment she seemed too much surprised to say a word.

"No secret, we hope," Mr. Vernon smiled. "You can have those when company isn't present."

"Shall I read it, Frank?"

Douglas nodded with a pardonable pride. Esther read:

"Editorial rooms of the Youth's Companion, Boston, Mass.

"To Mr. Frank Douglas and Miss Esther Harris.

"Dear friends:

"Your MS. story entitled, His Mother's Prayers, is hereby accepted

by the Companion for publication. We beg to enclose our check of $100 for the same. "Very truly yours,

"Perry Mason and Co."

Esther held up the little yellow slip that represented the $100.

"Well, I declare!" was all Mr. Edwards could say.

"A real live author and authoress!" Mrs. Edwards exclaimed with some awe.

"All that money for that little story?" Mr. Edwards had recovered himself. "If I don't sell out the store tomorrow and take to authorship!"

Esther handed the check and letter to her husband. He refused to take them.

"It's yours, madam. I owe you several hundred already. This is the first payment."

Esther shook her head. "What's mine is yours, now. I'll save it for the Beacon for some emergency. There will probably be one."

She put the letter into her scrap book and asked Douglas to bank the check, little thinking how soon or in what form the emergency would come. But there were no forebodings around that table or on that occasion. Mr. Vernon predicted a large literary future for the bride. Mr. Edwards gave them plenty of honest advice about housekeeping. Quits surprised every body by a neat little speech wishing them large life and happiness. George convulsed the company by a response to the toast, "The Beacon and its assistant editor." And the evening came to a delightful close with the couple taking their leave for their new home, Mrs. Edwards and the aunt shedding a few tears as an accompaniment to Esther's shining eyes as she kissed them good bye and then took her husband's arm and proudly walked with him to the little cottage which was partly furnished to receive them.

When George's account of the wedding came out the next week in the Clinton Weekly Mail both Douglas and Esther were surprised at the quiet good taste of the "write up." Douglas twitted George

with having secured the services of Quits. George took such real offense at this that Douglas begged his pardon and gave him some hearty encouragement to cultivate writing in general. George shook his head at that.

"I'm no good at anything but a few thinklets once in a while, Mr. Douglas. I have my limitations as the boiler said to the engineer when it blew up because it was tired of living at such high pressure."

Douglas laughed but the Beacon began to print some of the "Thinklets," quite often during the next two years, and the readers of the paper made it plain to the editor in several ways that the quaint contributions were popular.

A little prosperity does not hurt a modest man and the two years that followed the marriage of Douglas and Esther were years of quiet but steady growth for the Beacon. The tide of sentiment and action in the county had risen higher and higher for a prohibition amendment. Douglas well knew convictions on that subject brought his paper into prominence. The Sentinel fought him as hard as ever, but the mayor had enough sagacity to realize that he was losing political influence. The knowledge made him bitter, and Douglas never experienced more personal assaults and abuse than he felt during the rise of the Beacon from an obscure and insignificant county paper to one of the recognized factors in the temperance movement over the state.

He had been obliged to add two more men to the printing force and advance George to a case, where under Quits' kindly oversight he was making rapid progress as a compositor. Those two years saw remarkable changes in the once ink-stained, awkward galley boy, who was the despair of the editor as he got in the way with daily regularity and pied the forms with a careless abandon that recked not of the cost. In some respects he was not changed for the better, and Douglas, going home one evening soon after George had begun to take on the airs of a journalist, spoke of him to Esther.

"I don't like George lately. He is getting pert and thinks he knows it all."

"You've spoiled him, perhaps, you and Quits."

"Perhaps we have. But I'm sure we have given the boy every chance. If he goes wrong he will have himself to blame."

"Go wrong! You don't mean that any thing—"

"I mean, Esther," Douglas spoke rapidly, "that the boy is beginning to use tobacco, although he knows I will not tolerate it in the office, and I have reason to believe of late that he has begun to drink."

"What! George drink!" Esther exclaimed incredulously. "Why! It is not possible."

"Well, I did not like to believe it, either. But Quits spoke to me about him the other day and seemed much exercised over something he had heard."

"It seems as if nobody was safe," Esther spoke sadly. "But what can we do, with the saloons in a little town like this to offer constant temptations? Have you ever thought, Frank, what may face your boy when he grows up? What reason have we to suppose that he will be spared any more than the scores of boys right here in Colby who have gone down in the last ten years? Mrs. Edwards and I were talking about it yesterday when she was here. She counted over twelve boys, children out of the best homes here, who have simply gone to ruin in the saloons this year. If a yearly pestilence or a contagious disease took that many, the whole county would rise up in revolt."

"It is rising up in revolt over the drink business, Esther. News came to-day that Clark county instructed its delegates to vote for the prohibition candidate for governor. And that has been the stronghold of the brewers for all these years. Anson county sent up a strong prohibition delegation also. Things are moving. This legislature may possibly do what Vernon predicted would be done in ten years. But

the people are greater than the politicians when they do move. And it looks as if they had at last begun to move."

Douglas went into the next room to look at the sleeping child. He came out, and going up to Esther kneeled by her and kissed her.

"Don't worry, dear, over the boy. He has your happy, courageous disposition. It is not like you to worry."

"I don't mean to," Esther replied bravely. "But I got to thinking about it to-day and my heart would break if anything should happen to the little fellow. You have no idea how much he is to me, with you gone all day, and what you said about George made me feel—it made me feel, Frank, like doing something desperate. What right has Jake Lawson to endanger the life of our boys with his deadly drink any more than civilization would permit any one to spread contagious diseases for so much a year?"

"It won't very much longer," Douglas answered briefly.

"Are you sure about George?" Esther asked after a silence.

"Of course I don't know anything positive except what Quits hinted. But the boy is not the same. He doesn't look me in the eye the way he used to," Douglas sighed, for George had grown deep into his affections since the Beacon had struggled into prominence.

Esther broke another silence by asking Douglas a question about his "boom," as the Sentinel sneeringly called it, for the legislature.

Douglas laughed. "The Sentinel is unncessarily worried. There is no prospect of my being a candidate, at least not yet."

"Would you run for the legislature if you were confident of election?"

"I might, if it would help the cause. Would you want me to, Esther?"

"I would want you to do anything that in your judgment was best," she answered quickly. There had never been a minute in Esther's life since she gave her heart to Douglas when she had not had the most implicit confidence in him and the most calm and un-

questioned faith in his career. She would have thought just the same of him if the Beacon had failed instead of prospering as it had.

After another pause Esther spoke again.

"Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Vernon want me to join the league. Are you willing?"

"Why—yes. Of course."

"We are going to hold sidewalk prayer meetings in front of the saloons next week."

"Do you think that will do any good?" Douglas asked gently.

"Why not? We women cannot vote. What is left for us but to pray and pray, and teach our children, and then trust God."

"I don't object," Douglas answered in a low tone. "But I don't believe it will do much good."

Esther did not answer, but when Douglas had gone down to the office on some special errand a little later that evening, she dropped her work on the table and went into the other room to kneel down by the child and pour out her strong mother heart to God.

It was Tuesday of the following week that Colby witnessed a sight new to it then, but duplicated afterwards in hundreds of towns all over the state.

About twenty women, nearly all of them mothers and most of them from the older group of church women, met at the Methodist church for an afternoon prayer-meeting and then, under the leadership of Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Edwards, they went out together and walked down the sidewalk to the Wayside Inn, singing as they went:

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross—"

Down in front of the saloon they all stopped and kneeled down. Douglas and Quits standing in the door of the Beacon office looking up the street, together with every merchant whose store was on the street, saw the proprietor of the saloon come to the door and stand there looking at the women. They saw Mrs. Vernon rise and begin

to talk to him. He went back into the building and shut the door. After another hymn the little company moved down to Jake Lawson's. Douglas could distinguish Esther's face among the elderly women and his heart went out towards her in a silent prayer for her and their boy.

Jake Lawson came to the door and motioned to the women to move on. They still kneeled, however, and Mrs. Edwards was praying, Esther kneeling beside her, when a thing happened that sent Douglas and Quits up the street as if driven by a great cry for help. A devil of anger was pounding at Douglas' heart and as he ran he was beside himself with rage, and the primitive man leaped red handed to the front and swept on to do its worst.

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE Douglas and Quits had run over half the distance between the Beacon office and Jake's Place they were joined by scores of men who had been watching the women and had seen the same sight that had filled Douglas with fury.

After telling the women to move on Jake Lawson had gone back into his saloon while the women continued to kneel and pray on the sidewalk. He suddenly appeared again at the door and deliberately threw a pailful of water over the kneeling women. The insult was one that under other circumstances might not have provoked any great degree of indignation. Among the women themselves it did not. They rose quietly enough and started to go on down the walk to the next saloon. Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Edwards and Esther had been nearest the door and had received the greater part of the drenching. They did not appear to be much disturbed by it, and Mrs. Vernon had begun singing another hymn to cheer on the other women who began to feel a little frightened, when they all noted the rush of men from all sides towards them.

Douglas and Quits were not the only men in Colby that day who viewed that insult to the women with a white heated anger. There were dozens of old soldiers there who had known and reverenced Mother Vernon and Mrs. Edwards as wives of comrades, who had ministered to them personally on the field and in the hospital, and moved in and out of the community in Colby honored and beloved by all the citizens.

The sight of one of the most degraded and useless members of society treating these honored women with an insult so plain and unprovoked, stirred every man who saw it with passion. There were two other young married women who had gone with Esther. Their husbands were clerks in Mr. Edwards' store and they were standing with Mr. Edwards in the doorway when Lawson threw his pail of water, but young as they were, and stirred with the same indignation that roused Douglas at the sight, they could not outdistance the old soldier, who was as gallant a lover as if he had been married yesterday. He raced up the street like a war horse and arrived in front of the saloon just as Douglas with a dozen others came up panting and furious.

Jake Lawson saw the mob coming and hastily retreated, locking the door just in time to prevent Douglas from pushing it open with his shoulders. Douglas, panting and trembling from his furious run, could hear the saloonkeeper barring the door with some furniture dragged out of the bar room. Half a dozen men with Douglas had now crowded up against the door and were battering it with their fists.

"Open up, or we'll tear the whole front off your place!" yelled Mr. Edwards, who was one of the men next to Douglas.

"The first man to break in here will get a dose of cold lead," Jake shouted back as he continued to fortify his position.

"Here, Mr. Edwards," some one yelled. "Here! Smash it in with this."

A heavy plank torn from an advertising board near by was thrust forward and a dozen pair of eager hands seized it. Douglas was mad with hate. The older men in the mob had old scores to settle with Jake Lawson for various injuries inflicted on children or relatives in his business. And another tragedy might have been added that day to the heavy list already due to the saloon, when a woman's voice was heard above the angry cries of the men. Douglas drew back and his hands let go their hold on the plank. It was Esther who was speaking.

"Stop!" she cried. "Stop! This is not the way to fight the saloon. You will do more harm than good."

"It's what we want to do, right now," yelled a man next to Edwards.

"Frank! Frank!" Esther appealed to him as he stood wedged in among the others, who paused instinctively as Esther's clear, strong voice rose striking in among all the rougher notes like some sweet-toned instrument. "Tell them it is a mistake. We are not hurt. Mr. Edwards! Tell them to stop! What are a few drops of water! Frank, you know you are doing a thing for which you will have to be sorry. It is not the way."

"Go on!" shouted one of the men behind Mr. Edwards. "Go on! Are we going to have our women insulted by Jake Lawson and do nothing about it? I say let's tear his old shebang down!"

"That's right. Smash in his windows!" some one back on the sidewalk shouted.

"Hold on! Hold on! boys," Mr. Edwards called out in his old style that more than one man remembered hearing in places when bullets were the main argument. "Mrs. Douglas isn't far wrong. We're doing a thing that won't aid the cause. We're bound to think of that!"

"I don't know that we are," muttered one of the men who had hold of the plank.

"James Edwards!" called out his wife. "You know this won't help any. Smashing Jake Lawson's saloon won't drive him out. He can build another. And you'll have it to pay for. What you men want to do is to vote Jake Lawson out of business. If we women could do it we'd 'a' done it long ago."

Several of the men said, "That's so!" And another man let go of the plank. Mrs. Vernon and several other of the women added their plea to Esther's. She had finally succeeded in getting near enough to Douglas to put her hand on his arm.

"Come, Frank," she said with her old time smile that he never could resist, "come! The little insult to us is nothing. But if you do violence here to-day it will help to defeat what we are giving our lives for. Let Jake Lawson alone. His pail of water will win us more converts than a year's campaign speeches if you do not strike back."

Douglas bowed his head and right there on Jake Lawson's premises he fought out another fight. He knew his wife had wisdom on her side and he wondered even there at her remarkable self-restraint and foresight. He had occasion more than once during the next five years to thank God for the gift of one of the rarest natures as helpmeet in his life, but perhaps never at any time more than this.

He swiftly yielded to her judgment and as swiftly acted upon it. He raised his arm and shouted,

"Three cheers for the brave women of Colby!"

Mr. Edwards led off with a rousing three times three.

"And, I say, Mrs. Edwards is right," Douglas went on after a pause that followed. "What can we gain by breaking up Jake Lawson's saloon? I was just as eager for it as any of you a few moments ago, but I am fortunate in having a wife that has more sense. We have everything to gain and nothing to lose by letting the saloon alone. But let's go back to our business and help roll up a stack of votes against the saloon as an institution, that will batter it into everlasting oblivion."

"That's right! That's sense!" different ones cried. The women all urged the wisdom of Douglas' remarks. He and Edwards walked away from the door, and the few men who now had hold of the plank hesitated a moment and threw it down on the walk.

"I'd given a good deal, though," said Edwards with a sigh, "if I could have got hold of Jake Lawson's hide for one minute. I expect God will make him more uncomfortable than I could."

The men began slowly to scatter. The women formed again and Mrs. Vernon said something about going on to the next saloon.

Mr. Edwards spoke decidedly. "Now, then, ladies, you don't go

to any more saloons. Not with my consent. Julia, we have listened to your reason as we should. But I say it is simply casting pearls before swine to go praying for these whiskey men. Go and have your prayer-meetings in the churches. Am I right, Douglas?"

"I don't want Esther to go any more," Douglas answered. "I question the value of it. I believe it's a matter of pearls before swine all right in Jake Lawson's case, and probably all the other saloon keepers. They know well enough they are engaged in a Godless business. There isn't one of them who does not know just as well as we that the whole liquor business creats hell on earth. With that full knowledge they deliberately choose to engage in it because of the enormous profits compared with the brains and ability to run it. I don't object to the women praying for all of these men. They need it. But I do object to their being exposed to needless insult from them."

"And yet, Mr. Douglas, can you blame us women if we feel driven to resort to any and every means in our power to remove this awful evil from our town and state?" asked an elderly woman whom Douglas recognized as one of the wives in Colby whose husband was steadily becoming a common drunkard. "You men will not permit us women the right of suffrage in state affairs. What is there for us to do but pray and wait?"

There was silence after the question. It was broken by Mrs. Vernon, who turned and faced the women.

"We do not need to give up praying for these men, even if we do not pray here on the walk in front of their places. Is God restricted in His almighty power to answer, whether we pray in one place or another? Let us pray at home and in our churches and at our daily work. God is not dead. He will hear and answer our righteous prayers."

"That's right," Mrs. Edwards vigorously seconded Mrs. Vernon. "Let's go home and do our praying as we work."

The women went home that afternoon, but it was a long time

before Colby forgot that stirring afternoon in front of Jake Lawson's. If a saloon keeper can lose caste, he lost it from that date. Even the men who continued to frequent his bar had a contempt for him and showed it in many ways.

But there was one man in Colby who brooded over the event of the afternoon until it finally led to one of the strangest acts in the history of the temperance movement in Anderson. The man was Quits, and he broke a long silence one afternoon about two weeks after the affair with Jake Lawson by saying to George:

"The thing that makes me mad, is the fact that Jake Lawson never heard the prayers of the women. He didn't dare listen to them. That's the case with all the saloon men and brewers. They never hear any prayers. And they don't dare to listen. I don't believe any living man could listen to Mother Vernon's prayers or to Mr. Edwards' or Mrs. Douglas' and then go right on selling liquor."

"You're wrong there, Quits. I don't believe anything could have any effect on Lawson."

"I'd like to try him and see," replied Quits in a strange tone.

"What do you mean?" asked George, in astonishment.

"If I work out my idea, will you help?" asked Quits, looking at George doubtfully.

"Of course I will," replied George, promptly. George had shot up during the last three years to a somewhat awkward, but quite stout and well developed youth, and Quits had good reasons for wanting to keep friendly with him and retain his influence and intimacy up to this time unimpaired.

"I'll tell you when I'm ready," Quits said briefly, and George forgot all about it the next day.

A week later Quits invited George to supper with him, and after the meal he told of his plan and asked George's help. There was no work to do at the Beacon office that night, and the evening was before them.

George listened to the plan proposed by Quits, and when he was through the boy stared at him in amazement.

"You're crazy, Quits!"

"No, I'm not," replied Quits doggedly. 'It can be done and the risk is not very great. I've taken bigger ones many times riding on the bogies of the through express. If you don't want to go into it, I'll try it alone."

"No—I'll go with you. But what if he gets the drop on us?"

"He won't," Quits said shortly. "I've known Jake Lawson longer than you have. He's one of the biggest cowards in Anderson county. There's no danger to us."

When Quits and George started out from the boarding house it was nearly eight o'clock. The night was warm and the Methodist church bell was ringing for the special prayer-meeting which the temperance women of Colby had established for Wednesday nights, since their attempt to hold their service in front of the saloons.

Quits carried on his arm a small blanket, and he gave to George a coil of small rope. They walked along one of the streets parallel to the main street until they were a block above Jake's Place, then crossed over the main thoroughfare into the alley that ran past the rear of the saloon. Half a block from the rear of the saloon Quits stopped and listened. The rumble of a heavy wagon at the farther end of the alley seemed to assure him.

"He'll be out in a minute," he muttered, and motioned George to come along. Together they went down the alley until they were standing in the shadow of the short platform at the rear of the saloon where Jake put out his empty kegs for the beer wagon to collect.

Evidently Quits had studied the entire detail of his plan with a nicety and precision that George could not help admiring, although his young heart was beating a tattoo on his ribs, and if truth were told he would have run away if Quits had not laid a heavy hand on his arm.

For three weeks there had been a strike among the teamsters in Colby and Clinton. The Clinton men had combined against the saloon men in Colby for less night work. The Colby saloon men had fought the demand and pressed into service every team they could get. There was, however, great irregularity of deliveries. Quits must have noticed, with a strategist's keenness for minute detail, the time that elapsed between the entrance of the delivery beer wagon into the alley four blocks away, where the first saloon was located, and the time it generally reached Jake's Place. At any rate he reasoned that the chances were good that at some time during the early evening he would come out of the rear door of the saloon upon the platform to roll out empty kegs or listen for the approach of the wagon, since that was the regular time for receiving a fresh supply of liquor from Clinton.

He climbed quietly upon the platform and stood close by the door, with his back against the building, and motioned to George to come up and stand beside him. There was just room for them both. The door was partly opened and they could hear the clinking of glasses at the bar and the sound of voices.

"Do you want the rope now?" whispered George, his teeth chattering a little.

"No, but have it ready. Do just as I told you. Keep still. He's coming."

There was a step along the passage way and the door was opened. Jake came out, and glancing up the alley, muttered an oath at the striking teamsters and the late delivery.

The next instant Quits had thrown his blanket over the saloon keeper's head, twisted the ends of the blanket tightly around the back of his neck, and thrown his long, powerful arms about his body.

Lawson was not a very large man by the side of Quits, and was hardly a match even for George. But after the first shock of surprise

he tried to cry out through the folds of the blanket, and began to kick at Quits vigorously.

Quits lifted him off his feet, dropped him over the edge of the platform and threw him down at full length, kneeling on Lawson's legs, and then, before the saloon keeper could recover from his second shock, he raised his body up from the ground and pinioned his arms to his sides with the help of George, who now that the first fright was over, entered into the spirit of Quits' strange adventure with the delight of a rapidly-awakening desire for excitement of the unusual sort.

"Take hold of his legs now, George," said Quits, as he lifted Lawson's body, and together they carried him up the alley for a block and a half and then laid him down again.

Lawson seemed stunned into silence during the time he was being carried, but as soon as Quits and George laid him down he made an effort to get up, and struggled furiously to loosen his arms, which were pinned close to his body with the rope. Quits pushed him back, and kneeling close to him spoke in a low but distinct voice,

"Jake Lawson, do you know me?"

The saloon keeper made no answer, and Quits bent closer and spoke a name that George could not hear. Jake Lawson heard, however, and the few words that Quits added to the name evidently had an astonishing effect in quieting him. Out of what dark past the once reckless, dissipated printer had drawn some Christ forgiven wrong with which Quits and Lawson were intimate, and for his share of which Quits felt pardon, George never knew. Apparently the saloon keeper regarded Quits now with apprehension. Nothing short of some deep-seated dread of a past he thought unshared by others, could account for what now took place. "Get up!" Quits said briefly, and as he rose himself he helped Lawson to his feet.

For a moment the three stood together, George and Quits each

side of Lawson. Then Quits said, "Will you go along quietly without making any trouble now?"

After a second's hesitation the saloon keeper nodded his head. Quits took off the blanket, and said, "Come along, then."

They went up the alley another block and then turned and came out on the main street close by the Methodist church. As they crossed over and went into the entrance that led by the chapel of the church George looked carefully at Lawson's face and will never forget the curious mingling of fear, apprehension, astonishment and hatred that convulsed his features.

The prayer-meeting had begun and the women were singing a hymn as Quits motioned George to guide the saloon keeper on his side around the chapel until they came out at the rear of the building. The night was warm and a window at the corner was open. Quits halted near this window, and with a remarkable smile on his homely face he pulled Jake Lawson up close to the building. Lawson's face was more than a study as he dimly began to have some sense of Quits' motive.

The hymn ceased, and there was a period of intense stillness. It was suddenly broken by a voice praying. At first the words were not audible to the listeners outside. But soon the sentences came clear and distinct.

"Dear Lord, have mercy upon the boys in this town. Many of them are going down to ruin. What can we do, O Lord, but pray and beseech Thee to hear us, not for ourselves, but for these who are being lost. So many, Jesus! O Lord, we Thy children have pleaded with Thee to save our boys. O God!" The voice broke with a sob and a trembling voice said, "Amen! O Lord, hear us!" Then the prayer went on. "And we pray also, dear Father, for the men in Colby who are breaking the laws and are engaged in the rum business for gain. O God, especially we pray Thee send Thy convicting Spirit upon Jake Lawson and break his heart of stone. Save his soul, O God, for the

sake of Christ!" (All over the room were cries of "Amen!" "Yes, Lord!" "Oh, hear us!") "He has sinned deeply these many years. But Thy grace is sufficient for any one. Oh, we beg of Thee, move with Thy power upon all the saloon keepers in this town and convict them of sin and save them! O Lord, our hearts are weary waiting for Thy coming. The church is cold and indifferent. The politicians care not for the welfare of our homes, and our boys are going down to death and no one but Thyself to save. O God, hear us. We believe in Thee. Thou art the hope of our souls. Oh, save us from despair and shine upon us with the light of Thy redemptive countenance. For the sake of Jesus Christ who died on the shameful cross, have mercy upon us and grant us deliverance. Break the yoke of the oppressor and set the captives free. Convict sinners of sin and deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom for ever. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Jake Lawson made a movement as if to get away. Quits laid his long, heavy hand on the man's shoulder and he stopped. But Quits felt him trembling.

There were two more prayers in each of which Lawson's name was mentioned especially. Then a quavering voice began, "Rescue the perishing!" The women were kneeling as they sang. Sobs and sighs broke into the singing, and the minute it was finished the prayers began again. Some of them were almost hysterical in their despairing energy. Most of them were spoken by wives and mothers who had felt the iron enter their own souls in home desolations that could not be revealed to any one but God. All of them, without exception, pleaded for the conversion of the saloon keepers of Colby and for Jake Lawson in particular. As the prayer-meeting drew to a close Quits' face expressed a grim satisfaction. When the leader gave out the closing hymn Quits drew Lawson around the other corner of the chapel and cut the rope that had bound him.

"You've heard some prayers for once in your life, Jake Lawson, and I hope they may do you good. Before you go I want you to know

that I don't have any hatred towards you. You did me a great wrong once—that time—" Quits' face worked strangely. "But you didn't know I was in it. I've forgiven you, and I don't bear any grudge. But you need to get on your knees, Jake, and cry aloud. A man that's had so many prayers offered for him as you have ought to be saved. You know you're a sinner, Jake Lawson. I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, my brother, and He will save you, as he has saved me. Will you?"

How much it cost Quits to say those words, "My Brother," no one but God will ever know. For a single instant Jake Lawson hesitated. What was going on in his dark soul after that strange experience who can ever tell? Quits waited praying that the miracle of the ages might be repeated in the man, but the moments passed, and then he turned without a word and went around the corner and out upon the street. Quits and George followed a moment later, and saw by the light of the street lamp the saloon keeper go in at the front door of his place. Then they went each to his own room, but George slept little that night and more than once Quits waked to mutter the words, "God, save Jake Lawson! Save him by the power of the cross!"

This event in Colby's history did not become public until months afterwards. Lawson had good reason for keeping still about it and gave explanation to his assistant for his sudden disappearance that night by saying he had gone down to the depot to see about his teamster. Quits never mentioned the matter until after events drew it out of him in a talk with Mr. Vernon. George promised Quits never to reveal the story of that night and kept his word, although in other respects he was daily growing more and more unreliable.

Douglas despaired in his soul as he asked, what spirit of evil was at work upon the boy. Going home one night after a trying experience in the office Douglas said to Esther:

"I'm afraid I'll have to discharge George. He is getting more and more unbearable."

"What! discharge him! Oh, you can't do that, Frank! Think how much that would mean to him. You can't let him go!" There were tears in Esther's eyes as she spoke.

"But what can I do, Esther?" Frank spoke in desperation. "I have pleaded with him to let cigarets alone. He's as nervous and irritable as a spoiled child. And there is no question now of his drinking. He came into the office one night last week under the influence of liquor and spoiled several dollars' worth of job work for us before Quits discovered the errors. I can't afford to keep him with me."

"Are you patient with him?" Esther asked timidly. She did not know what else to say.

"I try to be. But what good does it do? I'm terribly disappointed in the boy. He has had a good chance in the office to make something of himself. He is smart, but he knows it too well. He is ambitious, but he hasn't sense enough to let either tobacco or beer alone; and it is a terrible humiliation to think that a boy who has been with the Beacon as long as he has should go to the bad as fast as George seems to be going. If it had been some one in the Sentinel office it would not surprise me. But to have it happen in our office—why—it simply bewilders me, and to tell the truth it makes me feel bitter towards George."

Esther did not speak for a minute. "Have you ever intimated to him that you might discharge him if he did not give up these habits?"

"No. I think he believes his place in the Beacon office is as secure as mine or Quits'. He has grown to have the notion that he is indispensable, that we could not get along without his services."

"It does seem as if the boy had been helped a good deal," Esther said with a sigh, recalling the efforts Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Vernon had made, together with herself, to invite George out to the church

and to social gatherings with young people of attractive and helpful personalities. George always accepted the invitations, in fact he seemed to take them as a matter of course, but he had made no particular friends among these young people, and his preferences seemed to be with a doubtful crowd that frequented the hotel billiard hall and spent their Sunday afternoons riding over to Clinton or loafing around the railroad depot.

Two weeks after this talk with Esther, Douglas came down to the office one night just as the papers were going to press and found George with his hat on the back of his head, smoking a cigaret, and sitting on the office table talking in a loud voice to one of the pressmen who was at a case near the office door. He got down off the table as Douglas came in, but Douglas saw at once that he had been drinking. He did not stop smoking, and without any regard for Douglas except to nod and say, "Good evening," calmly, he continued to talk boisterously to the pressman.

A good many things had happened that day to irritate Douglas. We all have had such days when the world seems full of ingratitude and our little ship's crew of life have all mutinied and put the good Captain in irons and the devil at the helm.

Douglas said coldly, "When you have finished that job on the Edwards dodgers I want to see you a few moments."

The way in which he spoke made George look at him hard, and he slowly took out his cigaret and threw it down on the floor. He went over to his case and finished his work and then came into the office.

"Here I am, Mr. Douglas," he said cheerfully as he sat down.

There was not the remotest suspicion in the boy's mind evidently as to what Douglas wanted to see him for. And as Douglas looked at him and noted the handsome, attractive face (for the awkward, ungainly boy had developed into a promise of an unusually attractive young manhood) he hesitated to speak. When he did it was

with a softened tone and he spoke slowly as if to guard against yielding to anger.

"George, have you any complaint to make of your treatment in the Beacon office?"

"No, Mr. Douglas," George answered in astonishment.

"Have you any complaint to make of Mrs. Douglas or of me, or of your friends here in Colby who are anxious to see you succeed?"

"No, Mr. Douglas, of course not," the boy replied in growing surprise.

"Do you think we have not done enough for you to help you get on?"

"No, sir, of course not. Nobody could have done more." The tears came into the boy's eyes as he replied.

"Yet you deliberately choose to do the very things that pain all these friends the most. You know there is nothing that all of us are working and praying for so much as for the temperance cause. We are trying in this office to fight the saloon out of existence. And you, in spite of all the friends who have as you confess done all they could for you, you go and add your share to the saloon as a patron of it. It is a common sneer in the Sentinel office, I am told, that you are so primed half the time that you don't know a galley proof from a case of sorts. What makes you do this, George? Have you any reason?"

"Well, Mr. Douglas, the Sunday-school and prayer meeting and church socials ain't in it with the other thing. They lack tang."

It was a very unfortunate attempt on George's part to exhibit his smartness. It had so often provoked a laugh in the Beacon office that he had grown to be vain of his tongue and the applause of the laugh.

Douglas shut his lips tight together and picked up a blue pencil on the desk, drawing meaningless lines with it on the blotter. Then he lifted his head and looked at George steadily.

"I'm sorry to say it, George, but the Beacon has no further use for your services. You may leave at the end of the week."

There was a long silence. George's face turned deathly white. Then he stammered out:

"Leave—leave—the Beacon?"

"It pains me to say it, but you have brought it on yourself. You have repeatedly promised me that you would give up the drink, and you have always broken your promises. We have all helped you in every way we can, and you are altogether ungrateful. If you cared—"

"Oh, Mr. Douglas, don't turn me out of the Beacon! I'll do anything you say. I'll let you keep my wages and put them in the savings bank. I'll do anything."

"It's too late. You've broken your promises too often. I'll help you in any way I can to get something to do outside but I cannot keep you on the Beacon any longer. So that's settled." Douglas turned to his desk and George still pale and trembling stood irresolutely for a moment and then walked in a dazed fashion out into the press room.

Before noon everybody in the office knew that the old man had given George his walking papers. He was the object of some commiseration from the force, but of more guying. He had made enemies through his foolish display of pertness and false pride, and the new galley boy especially did not disguise his pleasure.

Just before noon Quits came to the office.

"Can I speak to you a moment, Mr. Douglas?"

"Yes, certainly," Douglas replied knowing what he was going to say.

"It's about George. Clark says he heard you give George his walking papers. Is that so?"

"It is," replied Douglas, for the first time in his life losing his temper with Quits. But it seemed to him that Quits was assuming to question his right to discharge the boy.

"I wish you would give him one more chance, Mr. Douglas. If he goes out now he'll go right to the bad, I know."

"What's he been doing all the time?"

"I know he's done wrong. But what would we do if God did not forgive us seventy times seven?"

"I'm not God, and I've forgiven him enough, it seems to me," Douglas said curtly.

Quits went back into the press room without any more words and Douglas went home feeling wretched over the whole affair, but not accusing himself any. It seemed to him that he had done the only thing he could do, and yet he was ready if possible to help George get another job.

About the middle of the afternoon George had finished some work and asked the foreman for an hour's absence. It was granted and without a word to anyone he walked out, was gone just an hour and returned to his case and quietly began again.

When Douglas entered his home that evening Esther met him with the exclamation, "Oh, Frank, George has been here this afternoon and told me all about it! He pleaded with me to ask you to keep him in the office. Can't you do it? Give him another chance. I'm sure he's penitent. It will simply ruin him to go out now."

Douglas stood facing Esther and for one moment he was tempted to a feeling of anger towards her. That passed away and the feeling was transferred to George.

"What business had he to come to you with it?"

"Oh, but he is simply wretched over it. Give him another try, Frank. You cannot regret doing the uttermost to save him. For the sake of our boy who may sometime need a friend give George the benefit of the doubt. And he has no father or mother. His home life has been against him. Won't you, Frank?"

Douglas could not resist his young wife. He felt as if his judgment did not go with his feelings in yielding, but he finally did yield

and promised to let George stay on and see if he would respond to renewed friendship and forgiveness.

So the following evening Douglas asked George up to the house, and in the sacred and hospitable quiet of the little home circle he and Esther pledged the boy their help and sympathy, and made him feel that there were no grudges or things kept back. Douglas went a step farther and promised the boy a rise in position at the end of the quarter, advancing him to a place in the office where he was in need of special help with an increased correspondence brought about by the fast swelling tide of temperance feeling that now promised to rise in a great flood and sweep the next legislature towards a prohibitory enactment.

For the next two weeks George proved as model a young man as Douglas ever knew. He seemed transformed by the confidence reposed in him. Douglas did him the honor never to watch him. He was made to feel that the past was past, and not a word was ever said about it.

But at the end of the two weeks a change was noticed in him. He seemed to grow irritable and several times flew into a passion with the galley boy. He avoided Quits, and Quits at once reported his suspicion to Douglas, anxious to do what he could with Douglas to save him. But Douglas was overwhelmed at that particular time with the pressure of work and told Quits that George was on his good behavior and he had not noticed anything out of the way with him.

Two nights after this talk with Quits Douglas was going past Jake's Place on his way home from the office. It was after ten o'clock and the day after the regular issue of the Beacon. The pressmen were not all required to be down in the evening. George had been absent during the afternoon, and when he went away at noon, Douglas had not noted anything special about him.

But when he was opposite the swinging doors that opened in and out close by the sidewalk a group of young men came out laughing and

singing boisterously. In the midst of them was George, his face flushed and his legs reeling.

The smell of the beer, warm and nauseating to Douglas, was wafted out of the saloon as the crowd poured out on the side-walk, and Douglas was hastening to go on when a familiar laugh stopped him. The next minute he looked up and saw George. George recognized him at the same time and a look of terror went into his face.

Without a word Douglas turned around and walked back towards the office. As he walked along he heard steps running towards him.

CHAPTER X.

DOUGLAS walked rapidly back to the office without turning around to see who it was that was following him. Before he reached the Beacon building the sound of the steps had ceased. He went at once into the office room, shut the door and sat down at the desk to fight out another battle along the narrow way of life.

The impulse that had turned him back from his way home at the sight of George was not yet very clear to him. As he sat there for a few moments alone, however, it began to grow plain to him. The sudden knowledge of the boy's lapse into his old habits came to him altogether as a shock, and at first his feeling was entirely one of anger.

"After all we have done for him! It is sheer ingratitude. The boy has nothing in him worth saving!" That was his first thought. On the heels of that, however, had come the sight of Esther's sorrowful face which would greet him as he related the story on his arrival home. He dreaded the interview with her, and in a vague sort of way thought to defer it by going back to the office and doing some more work.

Once in the little room, he had shut the door, and after a few wretched moments of indecision he felt himself forced down upon his knees. He had begun to utter a few disconnected sentences of petition for George, when he felt the door open suddenly and someone came in. The door shut and before Douglas had time to rise and see who his visitor was George flung himself down at the end of the

desk and throwing his arms over the top of it and his head down on his arms he sobbed: "Oh, Mr. Douglas, pray for me! Pray for me! I'm lost! I'm lost!"

Instantly Douglas' thoughts which had incoherently been beating about searching after some sort of direction, became clear and straight forward. He got up at once from the place where he was kneeling came over to George and kneeled down by him, putting his arm over the boy's shoulder. And then he prayed, not so much for him as voicing the boy's own inarticulate sobbing for himself.

After the first few sentences George ceased his cries, and Douglas went on praying with earnest faith. When he had finished there was a moment of silence. Then Douglas said:

"George, you must pray for yourself. It is not enough for me to pray. If you are saved from this curse you must go to God direct yourself for help."

"Yes, yes, Mr. Douglas! I'll pray! I'll pray!" George cried and he began to utter strange appeal calling on God to hear him.

He had not spoken a dozen words before Douglas realized with startling evidences that the boy was not yet sober. The realization of this fact was so disconcerting to him that at first he had started up and withdrawn his arm from the boy's shoulder. Then there came to him with a flash of remembrance what he had heard the president of the college say once about the experience of an old mission worker at Five Points, New York, where hundreds of men had come and kneeled down at the platform in mission hall while in a state of intoxication and had been saved the next day. "Shall I think to limit the saving grace of the power of God?" questioned Douglas in an awed whisper to his own soul and he instantly got down by George again.

"Don't go away, Mr. Douglas, will you?" George asked stopping his prayer as Douglas made these motions.

"No, no, George, I won't leave you! God will save you. Put your faith in Him."

George rambled on again and it took all the faith that Douglas possessed to believe that the miracle of redemption could or would be wrought out under such conditions. But while still kneeling there, he had rapidly decided the farther course that immediately lay before him.

He helped George to his feet and into a chair. George shed maudlin tears and still mumbled indistinct sentences as he sat looking at Douglas something as a whipped dog looks at his master.

Douglas picked up his hat. "I want you to go home with me to-night, George?" he said cheerfully.

"Right, Mr. Douglas," George got to his feet instantly. "Do you think God will save me, Mr. Douglas?"

"Yes, I am sure He will," replied Douglas as he steered George out of the office and keeping hold of his arm walked home with him. Esther met them, coming out into the hall.

"You're late to-night, Frank. What kept you?" she asked, not seeing George at first.

"I've brought George home to stay with us over night," Douglas answered, giving Esther a look which she instantly comprehended.

Oh, wise and loving motherhood, how quickly your heart understands! Esther at once greeted George with cheerful heartiness.

"Come in, George; come in! We're so glad to see you."

George shambled into the door awkwardly, and Douglas placed him in a chair. He was already becoming drowsy.

"I think perhaps he had better go right to his room," Esther said quickly.

"I'm sleepy," George said in a thick voice.

Douglas helped George into the room, undressed him and helped him into bed. In five minutes he was asleep, and Douglas went out and related the evening's strange experience to his wife.

"Do you think God can save him?" Esther asked after hearing Frank's story.

"If He can't no one can. There is no help anywhere else, dear."

Esther was silent. Then she spoke slowly,

"You will not think me silly, will you, Frank, if I suggest something?"

Douglas smiled at the bonny face of his young wife.

"It makes no difference what you say, my dear. I have never known you to utter a silly word."

"That's flattery, sir. I have in the course of my not very long life uttered a good many. But I have been thinking that if George could be shielded just now at this crisis from his surroundings there at the Wycoffs, he might be helped. He has no home and he is constantly tempted by the crowd of young men who board there."

"Perhaps we might find him some quieter place," Douglas said thoughtfully.

"Why not here, Frank?" Esther spoke quietly after a moment.

"What! here! In our home? To spoil the—" Douglas spoke sharply, anticipating in one swift second all that such a responsibility would mean in his idolized home circle.

"If it would help to save him," Esther said simply, "would it not be worth all it cost? May it not be one thing God gave us our home for?"

Douglas looked at her and the tears stood in his eyes. "Dear Esther, little woman!" he ventured. Then he got up suddenly and went into the bedroom where the little boy was sleeping. He looked at the child a moment and then came back and kneeled at his wife's side, putting his arms about her.

"You are my better half, Esther. For the sake of the little man in there, I am willing."

When Douglas called George in the morning a feeble response greeted him. Going in he found the boy quite sober, but suffering from severe headache and with a rising fever.

"I know all about everything, Mr. Douglas. I'm sober this morning. But I remember your praying. Do you think God will forgive me, Mr. Douglas?"

Douglas' heart leaped up at the question. It was the same sober, genuine heart cry of the yearning humanity for pardon.

"Yes, yes, George. Never fear, God has forgiven you. Believe in Him and trust Him. Don't struggle. Just lie still and let God do what he wants to with you.

"I will, Mr. Douglas, I will," George replied, the tears flowing over his cheeks. "But I'm so sorry I have broken my promise and made you all this trouble."

"Never mind. It's all in the past, now," Douglas answered cheerfully. "We're going to take care of you here for a while. You can't get up any way until you get over this fever. So make yourself perfectly at home. My wife is a first rate nurse and she is quite longing to have a patient, eh, Esther?"

"Indeed, I am," cried Esther, who just then came in. "George, you are under my hospital orders now. As soon as the doctor permits I'll put you on a diet of apple pie three times a day."

"I don't deserve it, Mrs. Douglas," George answered humbly, and Douglas went down to his work that morning singing in his heart a song of praise to the good God, whose ways are not our ways and whose thoughts are not our thoughts.

During the weeks that followed George was seriously ill. For several days he was delirious. Sometimes during his delirium he repeated conversations he had had with the young men, his companions. Several times Esther and Douglas had revealed to them little chapters out of the boy's tempted life, where drinking acquaintances had with devilish insistence tried to lure the boy back after he had given his promise to drink no more. His cries of "No! No! I tell you! Leave me alone! Take the stuff away! For God's sake, boys, don't ask me! Take it away!" haunted Douglas for months. Long afterwards George

told Douglas that on the evening when he was seen by him staggering out of Jake's Place half a dozen of his old boon companions had come up to his room at the boarding house and tied him to his bed while they forced a glass of whiskey down his throat. Crazed by this taste of the liquor, when released he had followed these miserable wretches out for a night's carnival. The sight of Douglas had partly sobered him. He had torn himself away from his tormentors and started after Douglas as Douglas turned around. The crowd of half drunken boys had caught up with him and forced him into another saloon and made him drink part of a glass of liquor, but he had finally broken away and in the state of intoxication he was then in he had gone into the office.

When George recovered sufficiently to go back to work, Douglas asked him how he liked his hospital and his nurse.

"First rate. Couldn't be better!" George replied in the nearest approach to his old manner that Douglas had heard for many months. "But I can't afford to put up any longer at such an expensive place."

"It suits you, though?"

"Best on the road," said George lightly.

"How would you like to stay right along, that is, indefinitely?"

"How?" George asked vacantly.

"Esther and I want you to make your home with us awhile longer, George," Douglas said with great kindness. "You can pay for your keep in part by helping take care of little James Edwards."

"You don't mean you want me to room and board here with—with you?" George stammered.

That's just what I mean. Don't say another word, George. You're one of us, now. We all belong to the household of the faith, thank God."

Douglas went out hastily, for George looked as if he wanted to cry, but didn't want any one to see him do it. But if there had been any lingering doubt in Douglas' mind concerning George's genuine conversion it was forever dispelled from that moment. The boy showed

in every word, movement and desire the marks of a regenerated life. And as he went back into the office and took up his work Douglas offered a great prayer of thanksgiving for two souls saved for the Kingdom.

The delight of Quits in the conversion of George was deep and touching. All through the boy's illness Quits had come to inquire after him, and kept his room supplied with fresh flowers. Then when George was able to sit up and talk, Quits and he had the most undisguised conversations on religious themes. Unlike a good many Christians, George astonished every one, except possibly Quits, by a perfect frankness in the mention of Jesus and salvation and prayer and faith and eternal life and heaven and death and sin and every other word in the Christian's vocabulary. He seemed to be no more ashamed or afraid to use these words in ordinary conversation than he was to mention the things familiar to the office. Douglas was relieved, however, to find that the boy exercised common sense and a healthy attitude towards everybody. He was never able to discover that any one in the office was ever offended by George's plain, frank conversation on religious topics. No one ever called him a crank or a hypocrite—two good recommendations for a healthy, wholesome Christian character. Moreover, George retained his old sense of humor, and humor in a young convert is the salt that preserves from morbidness and sanctimoniousness.

The following winter when the legislature met at Clinton was in some respects the most exciting and most fraught with results to Douglas and his interests of any year of his life. The temperance sentiment out over the state had spread with greater rapidity than even the most sanguine had hoped. Mr. Sage's Temperance Picnic was only the first of a large number of similar gatherings in the townships. The county constituencies had rallied to the election of prohibition candidates for the legislature. Men like Mr. Vernon had agitated from the pulpit for constitutional amendment, and men like Douglas had courageously

used the press for the same purpose. And all over the state the liquor forces and the forces of selfish politics, like the mayor and the Sentinel, realized that a crisis had arrived that threatened their kingdom. They fought the rising tide of popular feeling with all their might. Money poured into the state from every whiskey state on its four borders. Threats were made. Voters were bribed. Men like Mr. Vernon who spoke out freely in the pulpit were denounced as unworthy ministers and the cry went up, "Leave politics alone and preach the simple gospel." No one was louder in making this cry than Jake Lawson and the brewers of Clinton. The brewers especially were exceedingly scandalized by the use of the pulpit for the preaching of prohibition and total abstinence. Mr. Vernon, however, who long before this time had been appointed to a charge in another part of the state continued to preach what he believed was the "simple gospel," and he suffered in various ways for doing so, as all prophets of applied righteousness have suffered in every age of the world. Judge Butler left the church in Colby and others went out with him. Mr. Vernon received abusive and threatening letters from the whiskey men and his own parishioners. Nevertheless he preached straight on and to the honor of his church throughout the state and of the churches in general they sustained their ministers in the wide spread agitation, and together with papers like the Beacon and picnics like those organized by Mr. Sage and the uprising in the country, succeeded in gaining a momentum of sentiment that was so apparent that the liquor forces realized their desperate chances and fought accordingly.

On the day the bill was to be voted on to submit the question of prohibitory amendment to the people Douglas had gone down to Clinton. Quits and George were at work in the Beacon office talking over the situation. The very atmosphere seemed charged with a combination of tonics and explosives, and no one in Anderson county or any other county was talking about anything but the "bill."

"Do you think it will pass?" George had asked for the twentieth time.

Quits was naturally cautious and slow.

"I think it will pass the house all right. I'm not so sure about the senate. We'll probably know before midnight."

"Did you hear what Jake Lawson said the other day?"

"No."

"He said he would never close up, law or no law."

"The people will have something to say about that," Quits observed quietly. "You must remember, George, if this bill to submit passes, it means two years of campaign to get another legislature that will stand for the amendment. That means that we shall have a county attorney and a district judge and a sheriff that will have something to say as to whether Jake Lawson will close up or not."

"My! We're in for a pretty lively time for two years, aren't we, Quits?"

"We are if this bill passes."

"Do you think it will pass?"

"I believe it will. I believe the clock of God's doom for whiskey has struck around the world, and that this is the beginning of the end."

About ten o'clock that night in the Beacon office George, who had hovered all day near the telephone, of which the Beacon now boasted, darted to it as it rang up again after the series of inquiries from different places asking for news of action on the bill.

This time it was Clinton that had called up the Beacon.

"Is this the Beacon office?"

"Yes?"

"This is Mr. Douglas."

"All right, Mr. Douglas. This is George. Has that bill—"

"Tell every body the bill has passed the house. It is now before the senate and will without any question pass with a good majority. Tell Quits—"

But George, in his excitement, had dropped the receiver and rushed into the press room.

"Hi! Quits! The bill's passed all right! Pass the news along to Jake and the Sentinel. Send out and buy some fireworks and double lead all the editorials!"

"Did Mr. Douglas say do all that?" Quits asked with a grin. But he was so pleased that he seized the galley boy who was near by and stood him on his head in the box of paper trimmings.

"No! What did he say?" George rushed back to the 'phone and heard Douglas calling.

"George! Say, Central, some one has cut in on me. George—"

"All right, Mr. Douglas. Here I am—"

"All right. Tell Quits to hold my editorial for a special edition. We'll get out five thousand copies tomorrow or next day. I'll call you up as soon as the senate vote is declared. I think it will pass to its third reading and go through without farther debate."

"Tell them not to put it off on our account, Mr. Douglas. Shall I ask Quits to put roosters at the head of every column? If we haven't got enough we can borrow from the Sentinel. They won't need them."

Douglas laughed. "Cover the Beacon with roosters if you want to. But we're not really entitled to crow until two years from now."

"But we don't want to save all our roosters till then. If we do we'll—we'll burst!" George said.

"Don't burst until you hear from me again," Douglas laughed and rung off, and George got out every rooster big and little and held them in readiness.

Between midnight and one o'clock word came from Douglas that the Senate had passed the bill, and the minute it was known George dusted off the cuts and it was with difficulty that Quits could restrain him from putting a rooster between every other display of advertising.

"Save some of them for two years from now," Quits said in his usual self-restrained fashion, now that the first excitement had gone by.

"All right!" said George. "We'll get some bigger ones then. These are so small they won't do for more than spring chickens. What we'll

need two years from now will be some of the prize winners a foot and a half high, like they had at the poultry show in Clinton last winter."

The passage of the bill to submit the question of constitutional amendment to the people roused the entire state to the struggle that now lay before it. The next two years witnessed a gathering of forces that could be characterized as nothing short of cyclonic. Men took sides who had never stood for anything politically before. The churches and schoolhouses were practically on one side of the question, together with the Christian homes and the rural districts. Whiskey and selfish political ambitions lined up in the struggle with every weapon that could be forged out of money, misrepresentations and appeals to so called personal liberty, and the battle grew in feeling and force as the final election day drew near.

At the earnest solicitation of friends Douglas had consented to run for the legislature on the temperance ticket as representative from Anderson county. On the county ticket was also a Colby man for county attorney who was heartily with Douglas and the cause of law and order against the saloon.

These were days that all lived "at concert pitch and the limit of boiler pressure with no one on the safety valve," to quote George. The final result was by no means sure. The two years intervening between the first victory for the amendment might give opportunity for vital changes in the sentiment of the people. Money poured into the state from brewers and distillers all over the country. The prospect of losing a whole state to legalized liquor business made the whiskey forces bitter and determined. A hundred thousand dollars now might mean ten times that amount if the state could only be saved from these temperance fanatics. The saloon keepers in Clinton and Colby were defiant and made loud boasts of staying on, even if the amendment carried, and among them all no one was more positive and outspoken than Jake Lawson.

"I'd like to see old man Sage or any one else arrest me," he would

say to his admiring row of patrons as they lined up at the bar. "The amendment won't carry no how, but if it does, boys, I'm at the same old stand with the same old stock."

Mr. Sage was running for sheriff against a whiskey man supported by the Sentinel. When Jake's remarks were reported to him, Mr. Sage said nothing but he took off his old felt hat and looked contemplatively at a bullet hole in it, his little reminder of that day when he chased Lawson out of his grove during the picnic.

When the polls closed on that eventful day in the history of the state no one could prophesy the result. Esther, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, and a group of friends came down to the Beacon office to hear the returns. The ladies made some coffee on the office stove and served a lunch to the men. Before midnight the press room was crowded with anxious, excited inquirers. Between one and two the returns began to warrant Douglas in turning to George and saying, "Better be dusting off those roosters, George. I think we shall need them." Before dawn the result was no longer in doubt and the press was turning off an extra edition to go out over the county that day proclaiming the news that the state through its people had declared for constitutional amendment forbidding the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and classing such acts as criminal offences on the statute books. Douglas, Sage, and the candidate for county attorney were all elected by good majorities.

Douglas was too busy with the paper to join in the impromptu procession of the jubilant prohibitionists who that forenoon marched down the main street of Colby singing temperance songs and cheering the newly elected representative, sheriff, and county attorney. Mr. Edwards headed the procession beating time with a small flag, his jolly face beaming, his hat in the air half the time. Behind him marched a number of Colby's best known Christian women, wives and mothers who had prayed and longed for this day during years of agonizing experience. Is it any wonder that, to these who had been through a

crucible of sorrows caused by the saloon and its accompanying vices, this day seemed the very jubilee of Reform, the very dawning of the millennium of Peace and Righteousness on the earth?

The procession increased at every step as it swung down the street and filed by the rows of saloons. People inside rushed out to the front to see what was the cause of all the commotion. Every saloon keeper in Colby came out and for the most part looked at the procession in silence. The women started John Brown's Body. Mr. Edwards waved his flag in triumph and the chorus had a great swing to it as the crowd was marching past Jake's Place. "His Truth goes marching on!" The song swept up the street triumphantly from men's and women's voices, and Jake Lawson heard it with a scowl on his dark face and a sneer and an oath on his cruel lips.

"It may, but I don't. I stay right here, law or no law," he muttered as the procession went by.

For the next few days Douglas was nearly overwhelmed with messages and letters of congratulation. The Beacon was given credit in Anderson county for a large share in winning the victory. His election to the legislature was also regarded as just cause for rejoicing. In the Beacon office, especially, the pressmen and entire force felt elated that the "old man" (Douglas was now thirty-one) had "got there." Quits was deputed to buy a floral horseshoe and put it on Douglas' desk, which he did, making a brisk but hearty little speech to Douglas which Douglas received with more emotion than he had felt at the letter from the newly elected governor thanking him for his share in the campaign.

Esther felt proud of her husband's new honors, but expressed some regret that his duties in the legislature would call him away from home that winter.

"Clinton is not far. I'll be home for Sundays. But I'm not sorry of this opportunity to get better acquainted with the men out over the state. I don't expect to be able to do much as a member, but I can

learn something that will help along the cause. It is a great victory, this amendment. The effect of it on other states will no doubt be very great."

Esther was thoughtfully silent. When she spoke it was to her husband's surprise. Years later he recalled her words and admired her foresight and remarkable self-poise even on the crest of all that present victory.

"Do you ever think, Frank, that it will not do for the temperance people to fall back on this law and expect it to do all the work? It will not do to expect that the law will enforce itself. And if education and agitation stop, now we have the law, don't you fear that in a few years we may have this fight to make all over again?"

"Why, Esther, we've got what we have been after all this time! What more could we ask? The public sentiment will demand the enforcement of the law and there will be no trouble about it."

Douglas honestly voiced the convictions of the vast majority of voters over the state. And it was only natural that the great overshadowing feeling should be one of exultation at the enactment of the statute.

The law went into effect three months after election. Before noon of the date fixed two-thirds of the saloons in Colby closed up and reported that they had shipped out their goods. Jake Lawson continued to run as open as ever. That very same night he made his boast to a room full of men that no one could run him out and no one had better try.

Next morning passers-by paused in front of Jake's Place to read a placard posted up in his front window. By the side of the placard was a bag of silver dollars with the mouth of it open so that the money was visible.

The placard read:

*$500. This money will be given to the widow of the man who arrests me. Jake Lawson.

One hour later Sheriff Sage suddenly walked into Jake's Place and pointing his revolver at the saloon keeper before Jake could reach for his gun he said quietly, "You will need that five hundred to pay your fines, Jake. There won't be enough left for no widows. You are arrested and I would advise you to come along without no fuss."

Jake Lawson not only did not attempt to make any fuss but amid the jeers of his patrons he meekly went along with Sheriff Sage and in police court was bound over for trial. He secured bonds from the brewers in Clinton. At his trial the following week he was found guilty on five counts and sentenced to $500 and five months in jail. His lawyer appealed the case to the district court and a jury found him guilty and he had to pay his fine and go to jail for the full time. The whiskey forces in Colby felt that the day was lost and as soon as Jake's case was decided they closed up and moved out. For the first time in its history there was not a drop of intoxicating liquor sold in Colby. The week after it was positively known that the last saloon in Colby had closed up for good, the temperance people held a praise service in the Methodist church.

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon were present by invitation. There were prayers and songs and many speeches. Women sobbed for joy. Quits told his life story, new to most of his hearers. Mother Vernon sat on the platform the tears raining over her face. In her prayer that night she remembered Jake Lawson in the county jail close by and asked God to convert him even there. When the meeting broke up and people went home it seemed to many and many a weary, waiting heart as if the coming of the new Jerusalem on earth were close at hand.

The next five years of Douglas' history were years of happy home life of prosperous growth for the paper and rapidly increasing influence as an editor. His home was blessed with two more children another boy and a girl. The oldest boy, James Edwards, was now twelve

*This placard was posted up by one of the saloonkeepers in a western town in Kansas for a week after the prohibition law went into effect.

years of age, with his mother's sunny, buoyant character and his father's resolute, earnest eyes. Douglas had won a good reputation in the legislature as a speaker and committee man and had been sent back to the senate two years after. During the campaign that followed that session he had declined a renomination choosing to devote his whole time to the enlargement and influence of the Beacon. George had steadily improved as a journalist and a Christian. He no longer roomed with Douglas but had moved into quarters with Quits, who still continued with the Beacon as foreman and whose chief pleasure in life was to spend an evening at Douglas' home, cutting out marvelous shadowgraphs for the children or teaching James Edwards, who had a faculty for inventions, how to put together a toy press the boy was learning to construct.

In this happy passage of time, surrounded by his home loves, with a promising circle of friends over the state, with a prosperous journal that made possible for him an ambition not only to do something for his home and the church but for the town he had come to love, it came as a shock, like a bomb thrown into all this happiness to learn through Mr. Edwards that Jake Lawson was back in Colby and was running a joint in the back end of an old warehouse building belonging to Mayor Bartlett.

The whirligig of politics is a thing that even politicians never fully reckon with. In the course of five years after the passage of the prohibitory law a new county attorney had been elected who was not so vigilant in prosecutions as his predecessor. Another sheriff had also succeeded Mr. Sage, who had been a vigorous terror to evil doers, and a new judge sat on the bench in the district court who in one or two test cases had seemed to lean in sympathy towards the law breakers. Still, in spite of these changes, the sweeping out of saloons from Colby had been so decided and the public feeling was still so strong that Douglas had not considered it possible that the whiskey men could get a foothold in the town again. He had yet to learn that there is

no force on the earth so persistent, so tireless, so sleepless, so lawless, so heartless in its complete disregard of human happiness as the liquor business. He had yet to learn through bitter and painful experience that while good people have a score of necessary public duties to perform in the republic, the whiskey man has only one thing to do, so that he is not distracted, as the good citizen often is, by a sense of responsibility, and divided in his means and strength over a multiplicity of philanthropic, religious, educational, and civic affairs. The whiskey man has only one thing to do, to sell his posion early and late, by law or in defiance of it, to as many people as will buy regardless of any results to them.

"Jake is doing a good business, I understand," Mr. Edwards said. "He has been going now for a week. One of my clerks who belongs to the committee of fifty gave me the information yesterday."

The committee of fifty was composed of the leading temperance men of Colby who had organized during the first year the law went into effect.

"How about Mayor Bartlett and his building? He is guilty under the law."

Mr. Edwards shrugged his shoulders.

"The new county attorney is Bartlett's particular friend. I doubt if he will take any action."

"Do you mean to say—" Douglas started up as the whole new situation flashed upon him—"that the law cannot be enforced and brought to bear on the owner of the building?"

"It can if the county attorney will bring it to bear. It remains to be seen whether he will or not."

A week after this information was filed with the county attorney by the committee of fifty to compel him to take action in the case of Lawson's joint and against Mayor Bartlett as owner of the building where the joint was operated. Lawson got one of the brewers in Waldo, a city in an adjoining state, to go his bond and immediately moved his joint into another building, this time in the basement.

When the case came up for trial the county attorney made a very lame case. The witnesses summoned could not remember what they had to drink. The very number of the building by a technical error, not however planned by the committee or the attorney, was incorrect. The district judge in his charge to the jury made it clear that his sympathies were not with the law, and the jury after half an hour's absence brought back a verdict of not guilty.

Jake Lawson grinned, picked up his hat and went straight from the court room to his basement joint, which was crowded that night with boys and young men, among whom were three of the jury that acquitted him, and the temperance people of Colby waked up to the fact that the devil was with them once more and that he had come back in the guise of perjured public officials, buying witnesses and the brewers of Waldo.

Douglas and the Beacon awoke to the situation at once. So did every law and order element in the county. At the end of two years' constant agitation from the Beacon ably seconded by the churches, a new county attorney was elected who had pledged himself to the temperance people to enforce the law. Once in office, however, to the disgust and indignation of Douglas, who had helped to elect him, this officer was found to be not much better than his predecessor. Jake Lawson moved his joint every month. Once he was convicted even with the handicap of a hostile court and a luke warm attorney; but on his release from jail he opened up again and made money. For the next five years Colby waged an incessant war against Lawson and a half dozen other joints, chasing them from basement to attic and from the rear of old warehouse buildings to shacks down by the river and around the railroad tracks. All through the conflict Douglas maintained in the Beacon, and rightly, that at its worst the joint could not be compared to the saloon and in reply to the assertion of the brewers of Waldo that there was just as much liquor sold in Anderson

county as ever he quoted a statement that an exchange had made since the saloon had been declared outlaw by the state.

"JUST AS MUCH AS EVER SOLD UNDER PROTECTION."

"Think of a grocer dealer skulking in back alleys with a can of coffee in one boot leg, a pound of cheese in the other, and a herring down the back of his neck; or of a shoe dealer with his door fastened with iron bars, his windows grated, and half a dozen men on the street corners watching for the officers and at the least alarm destroying every sign of the business. What man would say that the grocery business was flourishing, or that there were more boots and shoes sold than ever before in the history of the city?"—Cumberland County Deputy, in Search Light.

And in addition Douglas also declared what was emphatically true:

"We have as a state put the liquor business where it belongs in the criminal column. It is outlaw. It is not recognized by us as a legitimate business. We have declared it infamous on account of its black history through all the ages, and we say it is infinitely better to be having this continual fight with it than to sit down and be at peace with it through any system of license, and we should no more make revenue from it than we would permit the law to allow a certain number of men to burn houses at so much a year or rob so many people for so much a year for the revenue."

But as the battle went on during the year that followed Jake Lawson's return to his old haunts, Douglas was more and more impressed by the great odds that the state faced in being surrounded on every side by the whiskey license states. He pondered over this and began to feel a certain degree of helplessness, as he realized that throughout the republic at large there was a constant pressure to break down the law of his own state by the neighboring states.

The President's annual message had come out and Douglas was sitting in his office reading it. He was one of a comparatively few of the many millions of readers in the republic who always read the

message through carefully. After finishing it he threw the paper down, and for several minutes seemed absorbed in a new idea. At the end of that time he began to write a letter. He addressed it to the President.

"Mr. President,

"Washington, D. C.

"I have just been reading your annual message and I am struck by the fact that in it you mention a list of perils that threaten the life of this republic. You mention anarchy, and the loss of our merchant marine, and the threatening attitude of the Commercial Trust, and the cutting down of our forests, and the wars between labor and capital. But there is nowhere in all your message to the Congress any word calling attention to what seems to very many people in this country to be the greatest peril to all, and that is the liquor business. Anarchy kills a president or a king now and then, but Rum kills its thousands every day. The loss of our forests and our merchant marine is serious, but what is that compared with the loss to the working men and the nation of the round billion of dollars sunk in the saloon every year?

"May I venture to say, Mr. President, that though I am living in a state that has a prohibitory law I am not on that account a crank or a fanatic. But I am one of a few, but a fast increasing number of citizens who believe that a peril, as great as the liquor business is to this nation, ought to call for some mention with other perils spoken of in the annual message. I do not, of course, expect that a letter like this can receive any answer. I wish to express my appreciation of your ideals and your efforts to impress as the head of the republic the fact that there are other things besides the tariff and money that are of importance, and I trust that in some succeeding message to the Congress some account may be taken of a danger which, if it were a pestilence or a plague that killed as many citizens, would without doubt be referred to as an evil which the nation ought in some way to avert.

"One of the citizens out of many who love the Republic,

"Frank Douglas."

He signed the name of the town and state and sent the letter on its way with a smile to think how little an individual the editor of the Colby Beacon was compared with the President of the United States.

Opening his mail about ten days from the writing of this letter he came to the letter bearing the words, "White House," on the upper left hand corner, and opening it read from the President's private secretary that the President had read his letter with interest and would be very particularly glad to see him and talk over the matter suggested by his comment on the message.

That was all but the brief, courteous reply smote him into surprise.

He took the letter home and showed it to Esther.

She simply said, "It is an opportunity. Go to Washington by all means."

Two days later Douglas was on his way to the Capital. Three days later he found himself in the White House waiting room, waiting to see the President. The room was filled with a miscellaneous collection of politicians, foreigners, visitors and office seekers.

A door at the end of the room opened suddenly and a vigorous, alert, incisive figure almost bounded in.

"Mr. Douglas! I want to see him!" the President called out so that everybody heard.

Douglas rose with all the rest and faced the President as the latter took three rapid strides into the room.

CHAPTER XII.

DOUGLAS took one step forward to meet the President.

"I am Mr. Douglas, Mr. President."

The President in one stride was close to Douglas and held out his hand.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Douglas," he said as he grasped Douglas' hand firmly. "You come to see me about my message. What have you to suggest?"

Douglas was so astonished that at first he did not know what to say. The President spoke up as frankly and openly as if they were alone together in his private room instead of in the presence and hearing of a dozen people who could not help sharing in the conversation. It was altogether contrary to his expectation of a possible interview with the Head of the Republic.

But Douglas possessed a quick, ready mind, and he had sense enough on this occasion to say just what he felt, and say it in the same frank, outspoken way that the President invited by his own manner. So his hesitation was hardly noticeable before he answered.

"I have nothing to suggest, Mr. President, more than I suggested in my letter to you, that in your next annual message to the Congress you call attention to the peril that threatens the country on account of the liquor business."

"Do you know what that would mean, young man?" the President asked, looking at Douglas searchingly.

"Yes, Mr. President, I think I do," Douglas answered boldly. "It would mean that for the first time in the history of this nation the President of the United States had gone on record in his message against a business which has the curse of the ages resting on it and which ought to have no legalized standing in a Christian nation."

"That is not what I meant," the President replied after a second's pause. He looked thoughtfully at Douglas, but before anything else was said some one came into the room from the room where the President had been and coming up to him said in a clear, rapid voice, "Pardon me, Mr. President, but Senator Rolfe is ready and this is the hour you set to meet us."

"In a moment. Mr. Douglas, stay to lunch." He darted towards the door through which he had come but stopped on the way to shake hands with a man at that end of the room.

"Come in to lunch with me, Brandon. Glad to see you. We'll have over the old college days. You bring Mr. Douglas."

He was gone and the man named Brandon smiled and went up to Douglas and introduced himself. The rest of the people in the waiting room stared at the two and finally resumed their seats.

Douglas had heard of Brandon, who was a rising author and journalist. To his surprise Brandon had also heard of him through some free masonry of newspaperdom and in a few minutes they found themselves becoming rapidly on good terms.

Brandon had been to the White House before and knew the ways of the place as much as anyone could who did not know the unexpected ways of its new master. During the time intervening between the hour for lunch, and his meeting with the President, Brandon and Douglas, who had been shown by a doorkeeper into one of the parlors, discussed the President's probable action.

Brandon was exceedingly astonished by what he had heard.

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Douglas, that you criticised the President's message and that he sent for you to talk it over?"

"I don't know that I wrote in a spirit of criticism but I certainly did express myself very plainly on the subject of the liquor business and said what I most profoundly believe is true, that it is at least as great a peril as any that the President mentioned in his message. If a trust is a financial peril to the people and calls for mention by the President, I cannot see why the liquor business is not as great a peril to the people's welfare, and it seems to me it is far greater, in its yearly destructive results to the financial, moral and spiritual welfare of all the citizens."

"It may be," Brandon said thoughtfully. "But do you consider, Mr. Douglas, how deeply established in society and civilization generally the entire liquor business is? Do you realize what a tremendous departure it would be for the President to come out in an official document like the annual message and denounce what is to-day a source of financial revenue to the country and call upon Congress to recognize it as an evil to be legislated out of existence?"

"It is no more financially established than slavery was," replied Douglas doggedly. "I think I realize quite fully what it would mean if the President should do as you say. It would no doubt rouse tremendous opposition. But consider on the other hand what inspiration it would mean to the increasing hosts of temperance people in this country to find in the annual message a true statement concerning the nature and extent of the only large business of the whole nation which deliberately and knowingly year after year produces poverty, disease, crime, pauperism, and vice. If any of the trusts that have sprung up lately had mapped out such a program as the saloon has been giving us for centuries, I believe the people of the United States would not wait for legislation in the matter but would simply rub it out of existence."

"It may be." Brandon shook his head doubtfully. "But I think you do not even realize what it would mean to the country at large to find in the President's annual message a distinct arraignment of

the liquor business of the country. It is a thing no President has ever done, and I doubt—"

But Brandon was interrupted by a doorkeeper summoning him and Douglas to lunch. They were met at the door of the dining room by the President himself, who greeted them both with a hearty "Glad to see you!" and introduced them to three other guests as they took their seats at the table.

The lunch had been enlivened by college stories told by the President and Brandon, an old classmate, and everything had been pleasantly informal without any real lack of the dignity that is always worth having, whether it be in a White House or any other, when the President suddenly turned to Douglas who was seated beside Brandon at the President's right hand and said:

"Tell us what the prohibitory law has done for your state, Mr. Douglas."

Douglas seemed to understand at once what the President wanted and gave a concise statement of facts that apparently pleased him.

He nodded his head as if to say, "Well put. Not too much, not too little." Then:

"What, in your opinion, could Congress do with the liquor question from a national standpoint? Is it not a matter for each state to settle by itself?"

"No more than the states can settle the matter of trusts, each state by itself. The question is too complicated. If Congress can enact national legislation against a national peril like a trust, surely, Mr. President, it can do the same against a national peril like the saloon, and I do not need to repeat that between the two perils the saloon is by far the greater peril, in my opinion."

"How many people believe as you do?"

"Several million, Mr. President," Douglas replied promptly.

"Of course, I do not need to tell you, Mr. Douglas," the President spoke with dignity, "that I understand perhaps as well as you

do, the aggregate loss to the people due to the drink habit. When you and others like you propose, however, that the annual message contain what would practically amount to an indictment of a business sanctioned by the majority of the states and recognized as one of the larger sources of internal revenue for the government itself, you propose a step which is not as simple and easy as it appears."

"Mr. President," Douglas said after a pause during which there was the most undisguised expression of astonishment on every face at the table over the course this conversation had taken, "may I ask a question?"

"As many as you like. That is why I wanted to see you."

"Does the annual message reflect the President's own opinions as to what ought to be done by the Congress or is it the expression of his feelings for the opinions of the people and the republic's needs as he believes the people represent those needs?"

"Both," answered the President promptly.

"Then you, Mr. President, in your capacity as head of this republic are acting fully within your privileges, if you suggest in your message to the Congress measures which in your opinion will remove evils that threaten the state, even if those evils are established in the social and financial life of the state?"

"Undoubtedly. There are no restrictions on the President's utterances in the message. He is perfectly free to express what in his opinion is good for the republic."

"Then I do not need to say, Mr. President, that no one better than yourself could possibly appreciate the unmeasured help it would give to what is called the temperance cause, not only here but all over Christendom, if in a document like your annual message you voiced the sentiments of millions of Christian people in a Christian land, and declared even in a few sentences the necessity of the Congress taking some action looking towards the extinction of a business which after centuries of trial has proved itself by the consensus of civilization to

be a financial, physical and moral curse to the world. Even if you did not suggest any measures that the Congress might take, the mere fact of your calling attention to this world evil would be enough in itself to put enthusiasm and inspiration and good cheer into the hearts of millions who have been fighting this wrong for ages, and who are waiting now for just such an utterance as you, of all men, are pre-eminently fitted to make."

"I think you exaggerate the effect of such an utterance," the President said briefly.

"Pardon me, Mr. President," replied Douglas firmly. "I cannot think I over-estimate the effect such a statement in the message will make on the people at large. And you must know, Mr. President, that the people at large are with you. May I as one of the people venture to say it?"

The President smiled. Douglas' enthusiastic, and at the same time self-contained, rugged frankness evidently pleased him.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Mr. Douglas. I am not one of those men who affect to despise the good will of the people. If you are a sample of the people generally, all the better for them and for me."

He turned as suddenly from Douglas as he had turned towards him and in a few minutes the talk was going in another direction. When the President rose at the conclusion of lunch the guests all stood waiting for him to pass out. He nodded pleasantly to them and said simply, "Good day, gentlemen. I have enjoyed the hour with you." He paused by Douglas a moment and said in his clear, frank manner, entirely removed from any sign of secrecy or confidence, "I shall give this matter careful thought, Mr. Douglas."

Douglas hesitated a moment, then said quickly,

"Mr. President, how much of what has been said on the subject am I at liberty to make public?"

"As much as you please," replied the President briefly, and with a peculiar smile on his face he went out of the room.

Douglas turned to the other guests and saw reflected in their faces something of the feeling of astonishment in his own. It was significant of the character of the men who had that day tasted the frank hospitality of the chief Executive that not one of them ever spoke a word in public concerning the conversation at the table. When Douglas reached home he told his wife in detail all his experience. But he did not mention in the Beacon even his hopes of future action by the President. The Washington papers reported what was heard in the waiting room when the President bounded in and asked to see Douglas, but the reports failed to give more than a burlesque of the facts. One New York paper actually headed its account with the caption, "Prohibition Crank among the visitors to the White House! The President flatters him by asking him to lunch! Wholesale brewers need not worry!"

Douglas read this as he looked over his exchanges and smiled grimly as he thought the time might come when the wholesale brewers might worry if the man who sat in the White House ever did that which Douglas now prayed every day of his life he would do for the sake of the people, for the sake of the republic.

Coming back to his work after that memorable Washington experience, Douglas faced a new situation in Anderson county. The county attorney, who was a great lover of outdoor sports, had been suddenly killed while on a hunting trip by the accidental discharge of a gun in the hands of a companion. The attorney general had according to the state law appointed an officer to fill out the unexpired term. This newly appointed attorney was a notorious lawyer who had been attorney in several liquor cases for the jointists and gamblers. His appointment to the position of county attorney was an outrage on the people and the amendment, and Douglas vigorously said so in the Beacon. The Sentinel stood up for the attorney general's appointment and rejoiced at the sensible method that the new county attorney proposed of letting the joints alone provided they paid a regular fine every month. The jointists themselves perfectly understood their man, and

opened up without any pretense at concealment, and Jake Lawson put in a three hundred dollar bar with plate glass mirrors, and all the trimmings to match. In less than a month Colby was running with six wide open joints and an avowed policy, so far as the officers were concerned, of monthly fines which the jointists cheerfully paid out of a revenue from the drinkers in the town and county who walked in and out of the joints with the same absence of secrecy they had once practiced in their patronage of the licensed saloon.

All this filled Douglas and Mr. Edwards and every temperance man and woman in Anderson county with deep indignation.

Douglas held a consultation with the committee of fifty. The week following with three of the best known men in Colby he visited every joint in town and procured evidence. Under a new legislative enactment it was not required to purchase any liquor to secure evidence to convict. The fact of liquor being drunk on the premises, of saloon apparatus, beer pumps and so forth was sufficient.

When Douglas and his three companions entered Jake's Place it was full of men. At first Lawson did not notice them. In a few moments, however, he saw Douglas, who was standing near one end of the bar, and he came over and spoke to him.

"What'll you have, gents?" he said including Douglas' friends.

Douglas looked at Lawson but did not say a word. The three other men were also silent, and all four men continued to take notes, using pencils and note books freely.

"It's the first time you've ever been into my place since the good old days," Jake said, speaking directly at Douglas. "It's an unexpected pleasure. Won't you and your friends take something?"

Still neither Douglas nor the others uttered a word. Jake Lawson grew furious. He changed his sneer to a threat.

"Clear out, unless you want something! Get out of my premises!"

Douglas and his friends slowly went away in silence. Jake was

uneasy, but he boasted that night that no one could run him out. "Precious lot of good their evidence will do. We're solid with the county attorney. He'll see that we're not disturbed."

But neither Jake Lawson nor any of the other jointists who were all visited by Douglas and his delegation were prepared for the next move of the Colby temperance people. The delegation after securing all the evidence necessary to convict brought it in overwhelming quantity to the county attorney. He received the committee with promises to act, but did nothing. At the end of a week Douglas went to see him again. This time he flew into a passion and called Douglas names for interfering with his business.

"But we have simply brought you the evidence in these cases as the law distinctly allows. If you refuse to act on the information Mr. County Attorney, you are liable to impeachment for not keeping your oath of office."

The attorney started up and with an oath ordered Douglas out of his office. Douglas, who was accompanied with the three men who had secured the evidence, faced the infuriated officer calmly.

"I give you warning," he said, "if you do not take action on the information filed with your office against the joints in Colby we shall take steps to have you impeached."

The attorney retorted with another oath, telling Douglas again to mind his own business. Douglas at once reported to the committee of fifty, and proceedings were begun in the supreme court to oust the county attorney of Anderson county for cause.

That officer waked up when it was too late, and used every device he knew to escape conviction. But the supreme court happened to be made up of a majority of temperance men and the case against the attorney was formidable. The witnesses were unimpeachable, the evidence was plain and could not be refuted. All the guilty officer could hope to do was to delay the decision indefinitely, or else escape on some technical error.

Meanwhile, pending a hearing before the court, the whirligig of politics was again bringing new factors into the play of forces around Colby. Another state election made possible the election of a new county attorney. This time all the temperance forces had united on a man who, without any question, was heart and soul for the enforcement of the law. And it was with a great degree of satisfaction that, in the same issue of the Beacon which announced the opening of the case in the supreme court against the officer who had been arraigned, Douglas also penned his editorial endorsing the new candidate for county attorney, "who if elected, as every man in Anderson county knows, will do his duty to the fullest degree so far as the enforcement of this law is concerned."

Two months later, after all the delays which an ingenious criminal lawyer could procure, the supreme court found the county attorney guilty and he was ousted from the office and compelled to pay a fine of five hundred dollars. The decision created a sensation all over the state. According to the law the deposed officer was debarred from holding office in the state thereafter. Temperance people in other counties where the law was being defied, took courage, and in several instances took steps to bring their faithless perjured officials to justice.

Two months after this important decision the election gave to Anderson county a county attorney who enforced the law from the first day of his entrance into office. Most of the Colby jointists packed up their bars and moved out. Jake Lawson defiantly stayed on. He was arrested and his fine bar destroyed. When he had served out his jail sentence he opened up a joint again in one of Mayor Bartlett's buildings. The committee of fifty brought action against the mayor, and after an exciting trial the mayor was found guilty and obliged to pay a fine of two hundred dollars. He escaped a jail sentence through the leniency of the district judge.

Douglas had been very active in this case. It was not a matter where he could keep still, and he had spoken out in the Beacon very

plainly, urging that the law take its course with the mayor in spite of his social standing and his wealth. There was no petty feeling of revenge or malice in all this. Douglas knew he was not acting from any such motive, and knew he would have done exactly the same no matter who the offender might have been. Everybody else in Anderson county also gave the editor of the Beacon credit for absolutely sincere and patriotic motives.

The day after the mayor had been convicted Douglas was in the office going over some advertising contracts. He had been consulting with Quits about some details and Quits had just stepped into the press room to get an old advertising card that Douglas wanted. Douglas had turned around in his office chair to get a paper from a file holder near the desk when he heard a hasty step come into the office. He wheeled around in his chair to face Mayor Bartlett, who confronted him with a look of fury.

"I'll teach you to interfere with my business, you miserable sneak!" yelled the mayor. "I'll give you the whipping of your life."

He had a short heavy black snake whip in his hand, and as Douglas made no movement to get out of his chair the mayor yelled at him, "Get up you coward, and take your punishment!" He stepped back and threw up the whip. But before Douglas could make any movement and before the whip descended the mayor was dragged backward by Quits, who the next moment stepped around between him and the editor of the Beacon.

The mayor swore a terrible oath and lashed out at Quits savagely.

The whip fell on Quits' cheek and laid it open. The now maddened mayor struck again, and again Quits standing in front of Douglas, who had leaped to his feet, received the blow on his face, the thong of the heavy whip cutting a gash over one eye. The third time the mayor lashed out, but Quits caught the whip in his hand, pulled it away from the mayor, and threw it under the office desk. The next instant, before either Douglas or any of the pressmen who came run-

ning in could do anything, Quits had thrown his long arms around the mayor and forced him into a chair.

One of the pressmen picked the whip up from under the desk and handed it to Quits as he let go of the mayor and stood up wiping the blood out of his eyes.

"Here, Quits! Give him ——," the pressman said.

Quits mechanically took the whip as the man thrust it into his hand. The mayor cowered down in his chair, a look of fear succeeding his look of hate.

Quits raised the whip and threw it out of the window which was conveniently open just behind the mayor. Everybody stared in a moment of intense stillness. Then the pressman who had handed the whip to Quits said, "Well, if that don't beat me, I'm slug 50!" "Slug 50" was the pet name of the latest galley boy, who could make more blunders than any boy the Beacon office ever boasted.

The mayor slowly rose and said, with a feeble sneer to Douglas, "The next time you won't get off so easy." The pressmen looked threateningly at him as he moved towards the door, but Quits elbowed them back and the mayor sheepishly went away. Perhaps he divined in his poor contracted little thought that this act would cost him very dear. As a matter of fact, there was not a paper in the state that did not comment on the affair to the discredit of the mayor. He never succeeded in living down the disgrace of it.

But the minute he was out of the office Douglas caught hold of Quits' hand.

"Quits!" he said. "Old man, you ought not—oh—why didn't you give him the lashing he deserved? And that blow—it will disfigure you for life! Oh, Quits—it was too much!"

Quits smiled as he let Douglas put him into a chair and wash off the blood.

"It's my fortune, Mr. Douglas, that I haven't any good looks to disfigure. You have, and you have a wife. I ought to have got the

whip away from him before he struck. But when I saw him first he stood back of the angle of the doorway and I knew I couldn't reach his arm in time. It was the best I could do. Don't worry. It's all in the day's work, with all the rest that whiskey has caused. I'm mighty glad he didn't hit you."

"I wish he had!" Douglas replied. There were tears in his voice. Quits understood. He said softly, while Douglas sponged away the blood,

"It's nothing, Mr. Douglas. Do you suppose I ever forget all you've done for me? If it wasn't for you I never would have found the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you think I mind these little cuts? What are they by the side of the joy of being a companion in His sufferings?"

"But don't you think you ought to have given the man a good whipping when you had him in your power?"

"Vengeance is mine! I will repay, saith the Lord," quoted Quits. "Best leave him in the hands of God."

When Douglas told Esther the story of this affair she broke down and cried over it.

"It seems to me, Frank, that we are always living in the midst of trouble over this law. Are we never to know anything but stress and fight and reform and all the rest?"

"It's the good fight of faith, Esther," Douglas answered with a sigh. "One of the hardest things about it all, of course, is taking sides in a cause where one must of necessity make enemies of fellow townsmen. That is one of the bitterest cups I ever had to drink. I do not hate the mayor. But he thinks I do. I hate his attitude as a nullifier of the law. He is an enemy of the home and of civilization. For him personally I have no feeling except that of good will. But as long as the saloon continues to break down our Christian institutions, I shall fight the mayor in the Beacon because he represents lawlessness, crime, disorder, and barbarism as against Christianity. I cannot do other-

wise, even if it cost us far more than it already has to enter this narrow gate of life."

"I know. I know, Frank," Esther spoke, smiling feebly through her tears. "I understand fully. But after all these years I have been hoping so that there might be some end to all this trouble. Dear old Quits! To think of all the suffering his life contains, due to the drink and all its dreadful curses. Do you see any hope of any end to it all, Frank?"

"There is always hope, dear little woman, farther on. We're in good shape in Anderson county just now. This decision against the mayor will make property owners shy about renting anything to the jointists. There was a report about this morning that Jake Lawson had moved down into the Willows because he couldn't find any place in town. The jointists are like rats hiding in holes. The power of the saloon is broken here if we can elect the right kind of officers."

"Do you think Jake Lawson will ever leave Colby? I'm afraid of that man. I'm afraid he will shoot you or burn our house sometime."

Douglas smiled at his wife.

"Don't worry, dear. I don't think there's much danger. He's a good deal more likely to get shot himself in one of the rows in his joint."

"But the mayor—he's another enemy. Maybe he will do something to you," Esther astonished her husband by the first expression of timidity he had ever known her to utter. But when he thought it over he could not wonder at it. For nearly fifteen years they had lived at the very center of exciting events, compelled to take sides in moral issues, making enemies of dangerous people and living keyed up to a concert pitch in defense of a cause which was life itself to them. It was no wonder if Esther, feeling the strain of it all, especially as it began to assume a physical violence to her husband, should cry out against it.

Douglas, however, laughed at the thought of the mayor making

another attempt. "He'll never get over his attack on Quits. Don't worry about that, little woman. And there's good cheer for the present. The county is well cared for. We can take time for a while to enjoy life in other directions. It's not fair to make it reform all the time. And if the President in his next message declares himself, we will get such an impetus from that that we won't get discouraged for twelve months. The rum business is on its last legs any how, and that is one reason it is getting so desperate."

Esther was comforted somewhat by this talk, but next morning Douglas smiled at her solicitude as he started down to the office.

"Don't you think you ought to carry a horsewhip under your coat?" she said, half in earnest.

"Perhaps. Lend me yours? There's no danger. If anything happens I'll send George up to tell you."

"Do, that's a good boy."

"All right. There's no danger," Douglas replied cheerfully as he kissed her goodbye.

He had been at work an hour in the office when George came in. Douglas said something in answer to a question about the forms and George started to go out. He came back again and seemed to want to say something to Douglas but lacked courage for it. He acted so queerly that finally Douglas asked,

"What is it, George? Are you in trouble?"

"Not exactly, Mr. Douglas," said George with a grin. "I—I—I'm thinking of getting married and thought maybe you could let me have a day off next week."

"What! Get married! You, George!" Douglas pushed back in his chair and looked at him in amazement. He had not realized that George was out of his boyhood.

"I'm twenty-six, Mr. Douglas, and she's twenty four."

"Who's she?" asked Douglas with a twinkle.

"It's Miss Lewis of Clinton."

"What! You don't mean the daughter of Colonel Lewis, editor of the Clinton Mail?"

"That's her," said George, who never wrote ungrammatically, but sometimes spoke regardless of rules. "I've got her picture. Want to see it?"

He drew it carefully from an inside vest pocket. It was wrapped in tissue paper and Douglas' eyes twinkled as George unfolded about a yard of the paper and finally disclosed the picture of a good looking young woman.

"Rhoda, that is, Miss Lewis, is all alone in the world. She hasn't anybody except me and her father," said George, growing suddenly confidential. "I got acquainted with her last winter during the legislature." George had been in Clinton as correspondent for several papers. "Her father has been appointed as consul to Honduras, whereever that is, and has to start in two weeks. You know he's transferred the Mail to Judge Roberts. He's going out to Honduras for his health. They've been living in a hotel in Clinton."

"Who have?"

"Rhoda and her father. He is queer, you know. Some folks call him eccentric. He didn't just know what to do with Rhoda, and she didn't want to go to Honduras, so when I told him I thought I knew a way out of the trouble he seemed pleased. We can begin housekeeping here, and I have saved up enough to build something next spring."

"I congratulate you, George," said Douglas heartily. "Why, it seems only yesterday that you were stumbling around the Beacon office, breaking your neck over the paper trimmer and wasting the ink on your features. Remember that time you pied the forms, that day Coleman quit so suddenly?"

"Don't I?" George said with a grin that brought back to Douglas the memory of the office boy. "And the lunches Mrs. Edwards sent in? My! But that apple pie tasted good! I wonder if Rhoda can make apple pie!" he added contemplatively.

"Probably not," said Douglas, falling back into his old teasing habit that was common when George was a boy. "She has been living in a hotel all these years, and probably doesn't know any more about cooking than the author of a cook book."

George looked thoughtfully at Douglas.

"That doesn't scare me any," he said. "I would take Rhoda if she didn't know an apple pie from a straw hat. Besides we can buy most everything canned nowadays, Rhoda says."

"Canned apple pie must be delicious," said Douglas.

"And there are more than twenty-seven different varieties of breakfast food," George continued. "Most of them are already predigested. All you have to do to them is to add boiling water and salt to taste."

"Breakfast food and kisses won't be bad for a month, George. Then you will sigh for ham and eggs and coffee and doughnuts and beefsteak and potatoes."

"Maybe Mrs. Edwards will send Rhoda in something once in a while if we run short," George said with a smile.

He started to go out, but Douglas called him back.

"You haven't told me when the wedding is to take place, George."

"Sometime next week before the Colonel leaves."

"Where is it to be?"

George seemed embarrassed. "We've talked it over, and it didn't seem to us as if the hotel was just the place. So we were thinking of a church."

"What church?"

"The Methodist. The minister has a study in it and we were going to ask him to marry us there. The Colonel is willing. He seems willing for most anything. I believe he thinks a good deal more of his consulship than he does of Rhoda. He seems kind of glad to get rid of her," George spoke with some indignation, as he started to go out again.

Douglas had been thinking and called George back.

"I want you to go up to Mrs. Douglas with a message pretty soon, George."

"All right," George answered. "If we decide on Wednesday next week, Mr. Douglas, I suppose you can give me the day?"

"Have to, I suppose," Douglas said, smiling. And George went back into the press room whistling gaily as if relieved of a secret that he had kept too long.

Douglas wrote to Esther:

"George is going to be married next week to Colonel Lewis' daughter of Clinton. The Colonel is one of the queerest old men that ever lived, and has lately been appointed consul to Honduras, where he is going for his health. Rhoda, the girl, is from all I have ever heard, a sensible, good young woman, who will make George an admirable wife. They are planning to be married by the Methodist preacher at Clinton in his church study. The Colonel I know very well, and he is one of the most absorbed men in whatever is latest with himself. He will agree to anything his daughter wishes. Now, dear, we must have these young people married in our house. You talk it over with George and persuade him that it is the only thing to do. I will write to Mr. Vernon. He is back in Leander and is out of the active ministry, but is in good health for an old man, and I know he will gladly come on for the ceremony.

"We will have the Edwardses of course, and Quits and the office force, and make George's wedding an event.

"Your Frank."

When half an hour later Esther answered the door bell and saw George standing there her heart leaped up in fear. Douglas absent-mindedly had forgotten all about his promise to send George up in case of an accident to himself.

"O, is he very badly hurt?" gasped Esther, clutching the door.

"What? Who?" George exclaimed in bewilderment.

"Frank. Mr. Douglas! Tell me, George! Tell me the worst at once. Don't keep anything back!"

George grinned. "If he's hurt very bad I don't know it. He sent me up with this note and told me to wait for an answer."

Esther clutched the note eagerly and tore it open. As she read, a beautiful smile blossomed over her face.

"Come in, George, and sit down. You are the one that's hurt, according to this letter. 'Shot through the ear with a love song. Stabbed with a wench's black eye.' Now, George, tell me all about her."

She showed him Douglas' letter, and before George went back to the office Esther had arranged everything delightfully. George's cup promised to run over. "It's awful good of you, Mrs. Douglas. Rhoda and I won't forget it."

When the happy event came off the next week, George had reason again to thank Mr. and Mrs. Douglas for an occasion that was long remembered by every one present. Mr. Vernon came on as Douglas anticipated and Mother Vernon with him, both very old and grey, but still quite vigorous, and rejoiced to live over the old times with the Colby friends. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards were there, as a matter of course, and Mr. Edwards joked George all the evening about his fondness for apple pie and promised to send the bride a wagon load of canned goods as soon as the groom began to tire of angel food. Quits and the entire Beacon force were present and added to George's happiness by their real expressions of regard and good wishes. Rhoda pleased everybody by her modest, sensible manner, and Esther had not seen her two minutes before she whispered to Frank that George was to be congratulated. The Colonel proved to be a human after all, and quite surprised everybody by his gift to the bride which consisted of a $500 check to go into the furnishing of the young couple's new home.

So the evening passed off perfectly. When it was all over Douglas and Esther and Quits went along with George and his wife to their little home which was in the lower end of the town near the river.

They left the young people standing proudly in the little front room surrounded with kind remembrances of their many friends, and the night was so pleasant that Douglas proposed to Esther and Quits that they walk around home by way of the north bridge, as it was called.

They had passed slowly over the bridge and had come out on the river road still talking about the wedding and predicting all manner of delightful future for George and Rhoda, when they were startled by a sudden shot that broke the peaceful silence with a crack that seemed to come almost from the road in front of them. Next instant out from a little clump of willows down by the water's edge three men burst, coming on a dead run through the bushes. The minute they saw the group in the road they all turned precipitately and tore like mad down the road away from the town, and before Douglas and Quits had recovered from their surprise the men had disappeared.

"That's Jake Lawson's joint," cried Quits. "See! There's a light down there!" He pointed down the river bank, and Douglas and Esther could see a glimmer from the old shack in the willows.

For a moment they were all three still not knowing what might appear next. Then Quits said, "What do you think, Mr. Douglas? Had we better go down there? Somebody may be hurt."

"I don't know," replied Douglas cautiously. "Think we'd better risk it?"

"Yes, let's go," Esther said unexpectedly. "There can't be any danger, and some one may need help."

They went down the bank slowly. Pausing occasionally to listen for any noise from the hut, but it was still. That one shot was all that had disturbed that night's perfect peace.

When they reached the place they found the door open, but not a sign of any one about.

"You stay here until I investigate," said Quits, laying a hand on Douglas' arm. Esther was beginning to quiver with excitement.

Quits went in, and in a second or two they heard him exclaim in a

muffled voice. He appeared at the door a moment after and his face was pale and stern.

"It's Jake. God's judgment has found him," he said.

Douglas and Esther went back with him. They stopped in front of the figure of the saloon keeper which was lying across a board which rested on two empty beer kegs. He had been shot through the head and apparently had been killed instantly. He lay on his back with his face turned upwards, and the light from a dirty kerosene lamp distorted his features into a ghastly grin. Quits laid the body out on the board and covered the face with a handkerchief and the three went out from that presence and started to hurry back to the town and inform the officers. But on the way they met a detail coming to the scene. The shot had alarmed the police, and their investigation led later on to the apprehension of two of the guilty parties who were present. They protested that the shot had been fired in self defense and it probably was. But Jake Lawson's soul had gone to God and it was along the track of violence that the liquor he had sold often sent others. Verily, it is true, that in the history of men it has come to pass full often that in ways we do not anticipate He calls men to account. Yea, verily, the soul that sinneth it shall die, whether early or late, the summons is inevitable.

The death of Jake Lawson practically extinguished the last illegal liquor place in Colby. The facts brought out in the trial of the men who were present when he was killed, strengthened the popular sentiment against the jointists. Douglas noted with increasing satisfaction as the year came to a close, that all over the county it could truly be said that the saloon was extinguished.

Probably no one in the United States awaited the President's annual message that new year with more anticipation than Douglas. When he received the regular press edition for publication he went at once to the office to glance it over.

It was divided with convenient subtitles showing the different sub-

jects treated. He looked down the columns, seeing familiar words like "Army and Navy." "The Conditions in the Philippines." "Trusts." "Reciprocity." "The Venezuela Matter." "The Isthmian Canal." "Labor Unions." "Report of Coal Arbitration," etc. Then suddenly his eyes paused at a new word.

"The Liquor Business."

"I wish to call the attention of the Congress to a peril which has for ages threatened civilization, and is to-day a source of more financial loss to the people, of more pauperism, crime, wretchedness and trouble, than any other one thing in the republic. The liquor business has been declared outlaw in several states of the Union. It is being declared by local option laws in nearly every state to be, owing to its character and results, outlaw as a business. Last year this business took over $1,000,000,000 out of the pockets of rich and poor, and made both immeasurably poorer. I have no recommendation to make to Congress by way of suggestion for the checking of this constant wrong to the country. But I call attention to the fact, that, in considering other matters of great commercial and international moment to us as a people, we do not ignore a matter so fraught with danger to our homes, to our legitimate business success, and to our civilization as a whole."

Douglas read it through and rushed out to show the copy to Quits. Quits read it with a look of bewilderment on his honest face. The tears came.

"Mr. Douglas, this will do more to wipe out the saloon than anything that has been done in this country by any one man."

"I believe it will, Quits. It's something I hardly expected to live to see. I feel like getting down to pray right here."

Quits turned and walked into the office. Douglas followed, and the two kneeled down. Their prayers were like songs of praise. When they rose and looked into each other's faces there was the hope in them which men show in their faces when they see at the end of the straightened way on the other side of the narrow gate the rising of the

Sun of Righteousness which floods the hills and valleys of the Kingdom of God.

The President's Message was the sensation of the year. Whatever else was overlooked, that one paragraph on the liquor business was commented on by every paper, big and little, on both sides of the water. The liquor men were furious. The politicians were dazed. The temperance people were overwhelmed with joy. The whole country rose up as one man under the excitement of that simple declaration, and realized that the beginning of the end had come for the most iniquitous traffic, aside from that in flesh and blood, that ever humanity endured.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, Mr. Sage, Quits, George and his young wife, Douglas and Esther, and all the characters in this story are still living and still working and praying for the good time coming, when the saloon shall be no more. All of them have passed many times through the Narrow Gate of Life. God grant to all of them a happy entrance into the Holy City. "For there shall be no night there."

THE END.

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